A GENTLEMAN IN PRISON

The Story of TOKICHI ISHII
Written in Tokyo Prison

TRANSLATED BY CAROLINE MACDONALD AND
WITH A FOREWORD BY JOHN KELMAN, D.D.

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TOKICHI ISHII

Taken in Tokyo Prison

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WITH

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TRANSLATED BY

CAROLINE MACDONALD

WITH A FOREWORD BY

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TO ALL

IN EVERY LAND

WHO HAVE NEVER HAD A CHANCE

THIS STORY IS

DEDICATED

FOREWORD

By Rev. John Kelman, D.D.

It was on the *Empress of Russia,* in the early summer of 1920, that a certain group met. They were a mixed crowd, English, American and Oriental, gathered for ten days to scatter over many eastern lands—Japan and the further coast of China, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippine Islands—even of India, and in some cases eventually Europe. The winds blow cold upon that trip all the year round, with a touch of the northern ice in them: and the long chain of the Aleutian Islands, snow-clad volcanic peaks, strung like beads for a necklace on the Arctic, are surely the austerest jewels of the Seven Seas. So the passengers are much engaged in indoor occupations, and meet in groups in sheltered places for employments congenial to their desires. For our part we gathered round a little woman of Scottish Canadian blood, who told us the strangest story in all the world. That story is the present volume.

Miss Caroline Macdonald is carrying on a quite unique work in the prisons of Tokyo. The first visitor I met in her home in Kojimachi was a modest and quiet-eyed elderly man, who talked with shrewd intelligence upon many subjects; he had served twenty-seven years in jail for murder. Soon after him entered Mr. Arima, the Christian governor of one of

the great long-sentence prisons in Japan, whose acquaintance readers will make before long. The tale Miss Macdonald told us, of which this book is a translation from the Japanese, is indeed one of the world's great stories. There is in it something of the glamor of *The Arabian Nights,* and something of the naked hellishness of Poe's *Tales of Mystery.* There is also the most realistic vision I have ever seen of Jesus Christ finding one of the lost. You see, as you read, the matchless tenderness of His eyes and the almighty power of the gentlest hands that ever drew a lost soul out of misery into peace.

For the title of the book I alone am responsible, and although I am not satisfied with it, yet on the whole it is the most expressive that I could find. It is a true title, for Ishii was one of God's aristocrats. Even in his unregenerate days one notes the generous largeness of his nature, the instinctive diligence of his spirit and the honorable pride that finds it difficult to accept a favor. He is nervously high strung, quick and passionate, sensitive alike to kindness and to injury. Upon this delicate instrument life plays its violent music, handling the strings harshly and jangling the melody. There are two men here and the struggle between them is desperate. The bad man is bad with a vengeance, but the good man is entirely and instinctively a gentleman, and able, both in his own case and that of others, to see quite clearly that the world must be governed and that the lawless man has no real place in the scheme of things. In our title there is also a subtle hint of escape. No true gentleman will remain long in prison. He will find release, either within or

without the gates, making stone walls and iron bars a hermitage while others know them only as a cage, and in God's strange way eventually returning to his native freedom.

Besides its main purpose the book has other interests. Here you will find many a quaint and vivid expression revealing in a flash the picturesque chamber of imagery which is the mind of the Japanese. Thus when Ishii reads the phrase that brought to him salvation, he is stabbed to the heart "as if pierced by a five-inch nail": and again, talking of his grumbling over food, he remarks that he did not then understand "that one food is as good as another after it has gone three inches past the throat."

He is an inveterate moralizer. He cannot see the prison bath or watch the officers practising upon a bicycle without the suggestion of scriptural emblems worthy of Bunyan or of Quarles. He moralizes chiefly at his own expense, upholding the authority of the state as against the rights and pleasures of the individual, and he does it with such a calm and dispassionate air of impersonality that you have to force yourself continually to realize that he is writing against time—a race with the gallows. Moralizing may be dull work, but not when it is done in successions of inimitable pictures sketched in the artistic style of old Japan, all line-work, little filling in, and no background. Again the moralizing will give you many hints for prison reform, applicable to other lands as well as to his own. There is an astonishing amount of heart as well as intelligence manifest in the existing prison system as he describes it. Nothing could be quainter

than the fact that he has added to this book of death-bed spiritual confessions an appendix instructing Japanese policemen what to do and what not to do if they wish to catch a runaway criminal.

There is much here for the student of literary style. Ishii had actually to relearn the art of writing, and he had no time to learn how to express himself. Yet his very ignorance gives an unconscious literary touch to all he writes. His broken sentences, his abrupt and unelaborated periods, give a singular *naïveté* to the whole book. There is no after-thought, but only the sincerity of the untaught, which indeed imparts to the whole composition that "flavor" which his friend, the Judge, commends. The story is curiously free from vanity or even self-consciousness. Indeed the *naïveté* is quite incredible. As page after page he leads you through the horrors and the tender beauties of his soul, you feel that you are listening to the prattle of a child; but it is a child who has been in hell and who is now looking through a chink opened to him alone into the calm splendors of the Heavenly City.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the book for many readers will be its psychology. One can imagine the glee with which Professor William James would have seized upon it and given it world-wide fame. The prison psychology is especially interesting, and there is matter here for serious thought for the reformer. Nor is it merely a mine of morbid psychology disclosing the innermost springs of motive, and the baffling contradictions of impulse, which dwell in the heart of a quite phenomenal criminal. It discloses a true psychologist, full of curiosity about himself and

bewildered by the masterless passions of his amazing soul. At his worst he retains, as we have already said, the pride and honor of a gentleman, and in the supreme test insists on dying to save an innocent man. Cruel as a tiger, he yet responds to any kindness shown him like a charming little child. In the midst of a career of systematic and outrageous vice he sometimes acts in a spirit which many of the elect might envy.

I cannot vouch for his theology in all its details; he had but a short time to study it. Old Japanese ideals enter quite naturally, and astonish the Christian reader: as when, in telling the story of the Free Lances, he takes it as a matter of course that, if the priest had done his duty and obtained their pardon, they would at once have committed hara-kiri like honorable men. Yet there is a grasp of essential Christianity which must quicken the faith of the saints. Like St. Paul, he is persuaded that he is the chief of sinners, and reiterates the conviction that no man was ever so vile as he. He believes with equal vehemence in his own redemption, and immortality to him is a surer certainty than time. So absolute is this belief that we are startled to find him bent on cultivating his mind during the few days that are left to him, in order that he may be intellectually fitted to take up the new life in heaven when his hour shall come. In his view of the end, there is all the exhilaration which we find among the early Christians in the days of the amphitheatre. His condemnation is God's greatest benefit to him, eagerly sought for and received with overflowing thankfulness.

Most touching of all and most arresting is his fre-

quently repeated estimate of the faith and character of Christians. No Christian, he tells us, is ever afraid of death. Christians, as he conceives them, are people who always live up to the highest principles of Christ, and whose thought and conduct are ever worthy of His loftiest ideals. The only Christians he had ever known were the two women who told him of Jesus in his cell.

JOHN KELMAN.

November 11, 1921.

PREFACE

By Caroline Macdonald

The original manuscript of the story told hereafter, was put into my hands in the month of August, 1918, by a man awaiting the execution of the death sentence in Tokyo prison. Two weeks later he was put to death. Following the advice of a number of my Japanese friends who read the manuscript, the story was published, almost exactly as it was written, and the first Japanese edition appeared on Christmas Day, 1918.

A prison official who had charge of the man during his imprisonment and up to the time of his death, afterwards suggested to me that the story be translated into English, so that a tale of great human interest might be released for others than Japanese people. His reasons for the request were illuminating. He said:

"Much is said nowadays about the difficulties of mutual understanding between the East and the West. Ideals are different, customs are different, the background of life and history is different, and we face an *impasse*. Educated people, it is said, may approximate in thought and outlook, but for the people at large the case is hopeless. And while this is being said, we have had in this very prison an example to the contrary. A man, uneducated, steeped in crime, condemned to death for murder, waiting daily for the unescapable end to which his crimes have brought him, is touched

by one of another nation, and a woman at that, with traditions and history and education as different from his as night is from day; but the universal message of the love of God flashes across the gulf of human differences and the man's soul responds. I want your people also to know this story, because it illustrates from real life, and beyond the shadow of doubting, the fact that underneath all the superficial differences that separate us, we are one in the depths of suffering and sorrow and sinning, and in the heights of love and sympathy and God."

If the story carries with it this message it will have done its work, and will have fulfilled the poor fellow's own pathetic hopes that in those last moments before his death, he might accomplish a task that would help someone, when hitherto in all his life he had done nothing but hinder.

. . . . .

The case itself was an amazing one in all its ramifications, the most extraordinary one, it is said, that ever passed through the Japanese courts. A geisha was murdered near Tokyo, and her lover was charged with the murder, and arrested. He confessed to the crime in the police station, but at the public trial, denied the charge, alleging that torture had been used by the police to extort the confession. There was strong circumstantial evidence against him, however, for he was the last one seen with the girl before her murder, and it was known that they had quarrelled. He was convicted and sentenced to be hanged.

Before the sentence was carried out, however, a

notorious criminal, Ishii by name, was arrested for a petty offence committed in Tokyo and thrown into the police cells. Seven or eight other men in the same cell were discussing the underworld of Tokyo, and they mentioned that a certain man had been convicted of the murder of a geisha called Oharu and condemned to death. Upon hearing this, Ishii confessed that it was he and not the man already condemned who had committed the crime. The confession created a great sensation. The other man was let out on parole and a new trial instituted. The court failed to find the slightest circumstantial evidence, however, to connect Ishii with the crime, and acquitted him in spite of his confession. The man himself protested against the acquittal, the public procurator appealed against the verdict, and the case was reopened in the appeal court.

The trial dragged on in the courts and gained great notoriety. Newspapers were filled with the details of its extraordinary ramifications. A man confesses to a crime, later denies it, but is sentenced to death on circumstantial evidence. Another man appears, confesses to the same crime, but is acquitted despite his confession. During the appeal trial, however, evidence was adduced which confirmed Ishii's confession to its minutest detail, and he was sentenced to death. As he says himself in his writing, he was thus able to make some amends for his sins and at the same time to save an innocent man from death.

He was a man forty-seven years of age, with practically no education, but with a remarkably clear mind. He had lived a life of crime, as his own story will tell, but marked as he was by the ravages of sin, his eye was

clear and his purpose steady during his trial. I saw him often during those days, and on the morning after the death sentence had been given, he said to me very quietly, "It was God's own judgment and I am satisfied."

During the days of waiting he took up his pen to write down the circumstances which led him into crime, and the story of his repentance. He worked night and day until his task was finished, for he did not know when the end might come. I saw him for the last time just a few days before his execution and his face was radiant; but of that day and of the end I shall write when the man has told his own story. The sequel is merely the translation of the manuscript I received from him through the prison authorities, and is reproduced, as far as possible, with the same straightforward simplicity as the original. I have not hesitated to depart on occasions from the literal translation, but I think I have not departed from the spirit.

CAROLINE MACDONALD.

Tokyo,
August 17, 1920.

NOTE

Mr. Fujiya Suzuki, M.P., the lawyer Ishii speaks of so affectionately in his story, has contributed an interesting preface to the Japanese edition. A rough translation is here given.

When I read Ishii's story I could not but recall Victor Hugo's story, "Les Miserables." Jean Valjean at the age of twenty-five was put in prison for five years for a petty crime, but through successive attempts to escape, his imprisonment dragged on for nineteen years. When he was released he went to the home of Bishop Myriel and in spite of the Bishop's kindness stole his silver plate. The forgiveness of the Bishop melted his heart, and the words, "I have bought your soul of you," made him a new man.

This shows the influence of character.

Now Ishii was a far worse man than Valjean ever was. Stealing, burglary, prison breaking, murder,—all these crimes he had to his credit. He was in prison more than ten times and for more than twenty years. He was indeed, as has been said, an unequalled, incomparable scoundrel. But this man, through the influence of Miss Macdonald, suddenly softened, as the snow melts in the morning sun, repented of his crimes and became a changed man.

This also is the influence of character.

If anyone praises the virtues of the Bishop, he must surely also praise the virtues of Miss Macdonald. The Bishop Myriel was an old man, Miss Macdonald was a frail woman.

Ishii was a far more dangerous villain than Jean Valjean ever was, so it may be said that the power of Miss Macdonald's influence was much greater than the Bishop's.

"Les Miserables" is a novel. Bishop Myriel is in all probability a mere figment of the author's brain. Ishii's story is true and Miss Macdonald is by no means a creation of the imagination.

The time came when Valjean voluntarily gave himself up to the Arras court in order to save another man. "This man is not Valjean. I am the real Valjean." Ishii also on his own initiative gave himself up to the court and saved Komori, who was already as good as nine-tenths' dead. "Komori is not the criminal," he said, "I am the real murderer."

If we say that Valjean was a good man, I do not think it is going too far to call Ishii a saint.

The Arras court thought Valjean was mad when he made his confession, and in Ishii's case also the court was mistaken, and in the first trial acquitted him in spite of his confession and in opposition to his desires. Sometimes we speak of unappreciated favors, and this was surely one in reality.

As the Arras court was saved on the verge of a very serious blunder, so the courts of Japan, carried on as they are in the name of His Imperial Majesty, barely escaped making a very great error, which would have compromised seriously their whole jurisdiction.

Although Jean Valjean suffered much, he was comforted by the kind ministrations of the warm-hearted Cosette and he died in comfort. Ishii died on the gallows.

Both men repented under similar circumstances, but their manner of death was very different. I wonder if there can be some hidden significance in it all.

Ishii is dead but his spirit will live on through this little book.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	FOREWORD BY REV. JOHN KELMAN, D.D.	vii
	PREFACE BY CAROLINE MACDONALD	xiii
	NOTE BY MR. FUJIYA SUZUKI, M.P.	xvii

PART ONE: CONFESSIONS

I	MOTIVE IN WRITING	29
II	MY FAMILY AND UPBRINGING	30
III	GAMBLING	33
IV	MY WRONGDOING INCREASES	35
V	PRISON	36
VI	ESCAPE FROM PRISON	38
VII	IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE POLICE AGAIN	40
VIII	ELEVEN YEARS IN PRISON	42
IX	FROM BAD TO WORSE	44
X	A CHRISTIAN OFFICIAL	45
XI	A LETTER FROM A CHILD	47
XII	A LETTER FROM AN ACCOMPLICE	50
XIII	MY MONEY STOLEN	52
XIV	I FIND MY WIFE	53
XV	I GO TO KOMPIRA SHRINE	54
XVI	THE MURDER OF OHARU, THE GEISHA	58
XVII	THE YOKOHAMA MURDER	60
XVIII	I STEAL WEAPONS TO COMMIT FURTHER CRIMES	63
XIX	FLIGHT TO OSAKA	65
XX	FIRST CRIME IN TOKYO	67

CONTENTS

		PAGE
XXI	CONFESSION OF OHARU'S MURDER	69
XXII	MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS	71
XXIII	AFTER DEATH?	73
XXIV	A NEW YEAR'S GIFT IN PRISON	75
XXV	A VISIT FROM MISS WEST	76
XXVI	FIRST IMPRESSIONS	77
XXVII	"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!"	79
XXVIII	GIFTS OF THE PRISON HOUSE	81
XXIX	CRUCIFIXION	83
XXX	THE OHARU TRIAL	86
XXXI	PRISON CHAPLAINS	87
XXXII	HAUNTED	89
XXXIII	THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN	91
XXXIV	MY HYMN	94
XXXV	WHY THE POLICE DO NOT CATCH CRIMINALS	98

PART TWO: A DIARY OF IMPRESSIONS

I	THANKSGIVING FOR ILLNESS	103
II	THE KINDNESS OF A JAILOR	104
III	MERCIES	106
IV	CONCERNING LAWYERS	107
V	LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUFFERING	109
VI	A SPARROW TEACHES A LESSON	110
VII	THE STORY OF THE MINER	112
VIII	THE TRUE HEART OF A CHILD	113
IX	THOSE TWO FRIENDS OF MINE	114
X	PARADOXES	116
XI	BICYCLES	119
XII	THE HAUNTED WELL	121
XIII	ABOUT REPENTANCE	124

CONTENTS

		PAGE
XIV	THE FORTY-SEVEN LOYAL FREE LANCES	126
XV	THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM	132
XVI	EARTHQUAKES	134
XVII	A TALK WITH JAILORS AND POLICEMEN	137
XVIII	THE PRISON BATH	141
XIX	ABOUT JUDGES	142
XX	RECOLLECTIONS	144
XXI	THE KINDNESS OF OFFICIALS	146
XXII	THE PITIFUL LITTLE ANTS	148
XXIII	THE WRITINGS OF AN UNEDUCATED MAN	149
XXIV	"THY STAFF IT COMFORTS ME"	151
XXV	THE HEART OF A CHRISTIAN	152
XXVI	A JUDGE AND A CHIEF WARDER	157
	NOTES TAKEN FROM CAROLINE MACDONALD'S JOURNAL	159

ILLUSTRATIONS

TOKICHI ISHII . . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

MR. SHIROSUKE ARIMA 92

MR. FUJIYA SUZUKI, M.P. 108

MR. KEISHO FUJII 144

THE GRAVE OF TOKICHI ISHII 161

REVERSE SIDE OF MARKER OVER GRAVE OF TOKICHI ISHII 161

PART ONE: CONFESSIONS

A GENTLEMAN IN PRISON

I.

MOTIVE IN WRITING.

I wish to tell how my heart was changed through the power of Jesus Christ. But first of all I must make an explanation. When I was a child my parents were poor and I attended school for only two years. Since that time, which is more than thirty years ago, I have scarcely had a pen in my hand, until I take it up now to write this story of my life. It is impossible for an ignorant fellow like myself to write in any but the simplest way; so I shall only attempt to set down simply and truthfully the things that happened to me from my childhood up to the present time, and to tell how I came to believe in the great unmeasureable power and deep mercy of Christ, after I got into prison. In order to do this, I shall have to expose my shame and confess without reserve all my wickedness. But I shall be content if in the future some villain like myself shall be helped by the story of how I was saved through God's leading and the efforts of Miss West and Miss Macdonald, the two ladies who visited me in prison.

II.

MY FAMILY AND UPBRINGING.

At one time my father was purveyor to the feudal lord of Hikone, but he was a very heavy drinker, and often drank more than two quarts of *sake* a day. He finally failed in business, left Hikone and moved with his family to Nagoya. My mother was the daughter of a Shinto priest at the Atsuta shrine at Nagoya.* I was the youngest of three children, but the other two died when I was quite young.

We lived very comfortably until I was four or five years old, but by that time my father had squandered everything on drink, and my mother was greatly distressed over household matters. She was devoted to me and often went without the necessities of life herself in order to provide for me, her only child.

When I was ten years of age I left school and my mother told me of her troubles. "I do not know what to do about your father," she said, "and I want you to help me. When he leaves home in the morning you must follow him wherever he goes and keep him from drinking." I did as she told me. Little ten-year-old child that I was, I followed my father about, and would pluck at his sleeve when he was passing a saloon. "Do come home with me," I would beg, "Mother is so worried about you." My efforts were usually in vain, and he was often picked out of the gutter and

* The shrine where the sword, one of the three ancient imperial treasures, is kept.

brought home by the neighbors long after midnight. My mother was very proud and felt keenly the family disgrace. Things went from bad to worse and for more than a year we were in very great distress.

Then another misfortune befell the family. My mother was taken ill with a very bad fever when I was just eleven years old. My father took us both to the house of an aunt and then disappeared, and left us to shift for ourselves. My aunt was very poor and my mother was worried beyond words at being deserted in this way. We could not even afford to have a doctor for her.

Just at this time an epidemic of cholera broke out and the police were taking every precaution possible where fever patients were concerned. Because of this, however, rich and poor alike were trying to hide their sick folks from the police, for it was thought that the patients who were taken to the isolation hospital were dosed with a very strong drug that killed them off at once. In my childish heart I was afraid that my mother also would be taken to the fatal hospital, and I felt that somehow or other I must get her cured myself. You can imagine my delight when a neighbour told me one day of a concoction made by boiling earthworms that would surely cure Mother if she drank it.

As my aunt was very poor I had to do something to help to support the family, even though I was only eleven years of age. So I shouldered a pole with buckets attached to each end, walked two or three miles into the country, bought some sawdust (which we burn for a mosquito smudge), filled my buckets with it, trudged back and peddled the stuff from house to

house. With what little money I got I helped to keep the family and buy medicine for Mother. I won the reputation amongst the neighbours of being a very filial child. My mother finally got well, and that without having been seen even once by a doctor.

III.

GAMBLING

A little later my father returned and the three of us began life together again. Unfortunately everyone gambled in the neighbourhood where we lived, even children not more than twelve or thirteen years of age. Up to this time I had never been known to do a mischievous thing, but it was easy to learn bad ways in that neighbourhood and I was soon gambling with the rest of them. I then began to need money: the little my parents gave me was not enough, and I began to steal.

This was the beginning of my life of crime. As I look back now I realise keenly how easily a child is influenced by bad friends and surroundings.

My parents soon discovered my wrongdoing, and thinking it was no longer good for me to be at home, they hired me out to a chinaware manufacturer in a place called Seto, about fifteen miles from Nagoya. I could not stand the restrictions of a strange house, however, for I had always had my own way at home, so I ran away and found other work. I got dissatisfied again and at last returned home. I tried one place after another but did not stick to anything. My parents were helpless and let me do as I pleased.

I finally began to wander about peddling chinaware, and spent the money I made in gambling. For a time I was very lucky, but gradually I used up all my money and found myself in a sorry plight.

The advice of my parents and friends made no more impression on me than the wind blowing in a horse's ear, and I went on caring only for the excitement of the moment. I began to drink, to quarrel with my companions, and to frequent houses of ill-fame. I became utterly useless for anything and finally gave up all attempts to earn an honest living.

IV.

MY WRONGDOING INCREASES.

Just at this time a great earthquake swept over Gifu and Aichi prefectures, and after it was over the lumber merchants were very busy selling timber to repair the damage. I set out to get a job and found work at a large well-known firm. Every day customers came in large numbers to do business and the amount of material handled was very great. I sized up the timber on hand, consulted with a pal I had picked up, and got away with considerable quantities without its being noticed. We squandered the money on prostitutes, drink and gambling. At first we stole only a little at a time, but gradually got more daring, thinking we would never be found out. At last we made away with several hundred yens' worth of stuff at one time, but the fates were against us and we were caught. Our master dismissed us, but was lenient and did not notify the police. It would have been well had I learned my lesson then, but instead, my companion and I continued in our evil ways.

I was subsequently caught, however, and found myself in the police station for the first time in my life. I was scared to death. I was alone in my cell the first night and that frightened me still more. I was restless and did not sleep a wink the whole night. I kept praying, "O God, please send me back home again." (This God was not Christ; I did not know Christ then.) I whispered to myself that if God would only let me go back home I would never do wrong again.

V.

PRISON.

My prayer was not answered, for I was sent to prison to await my trial. While awaiting trial, first offenders and others are put together in the same cells and have a chance to talk to one another. One fellow who had been in prison before, said to me, "Don't worry about a petty little crime like yours; cheer up!" Under such encouragement I soon forgot all about the terrors of the police station. I was just nineteen years of age at this time.

I want to tell you some of my thoughts during this first prison experience. Up to this time I had thought that a prison must be a fearful place, but now that I was in, I found that the reality was much less dreadful than I had supposed; and there seemed, after all, to be nothing to worry over. The officials were very lenient to first offenders and I felt no special discomfort. The fear of prison was taken away, and this accounts for my subsequent downfalls. Had I been a man of education I might have appreciated the leniency of the officials towards me, but being an ignorant fellow, I merely thought a prison was not so bad a place after all.

One must remember another thing. Wherever your eye turns in prison, whether to the right or to the left, you see nothing but the brick-coloured uniforms of the inmates and you have no special feeling of shame when all are alike in the same condition. Men in prison are a community of knaves, and have no need to stand on

ceremony with one another, nor feel apologetic among those around them. Rather do we openly discuss among ourselves what we shall do when we get out, and arrange to commit crime together. *The fact of the matter is that a prison is simply a school for learning crime.* We are not supposed to talk among ourselves, but rules are not very strictly enforced with first offenders, and the result is that foundations are often laid for future crime while a man is awaiting trial for his first offence. We come to look on crime as our business, and so long as we get all we want for ourselves, we do not care how other people suffer. This is a terrible state of mind to reach, for one goes on from crime to crime, until, as in my own case, some awful deed is committed.

I think that special attention should be given to the care of first offenders. If they do not repent, the result is a villain like myself, vicious to the core, with crimes that cannot be blotted out.

VI.

ESCAPE FROM PRISON.

By the time I had been four times in prison I was already a confirmed criminal. In a prison community our claim to distinction is according to the extent of our crimes. The greater the crime the greater the honour, and men brag openly of the depredations they have committed. If a new man appears who has committed only a petty crime he has no standing whatever in the prison community. Under such influence I determined early in my career to commit a really big crime, and qualify for distinction in prison society.

With these thoughts in mind, it was not to be expected that I should settle down to work out the four years that were now ahead of me. I began to lay plans for escaping. I managed to improvise a covering out of some oilcloth I had gotten from an accomplice in the tailoring department, and one rainy day I wrapped it about me and escaped through an emergency exit.

Almost immediately I committed a theft, and with the money I stole, made my way to Tokyo, went to a friend's house, and loafed around for about a week. I then rented a house in Oshiage in Honjo ward and set up a small hardware shop. One day I was arrested on suspicion, as I could not explain why I had so much money in my possession when my business did not seem to warrant it, and I was detained for ten days in the police station on the charge of using an assumed name.

I finally said I had got the money by gambling, and I was not questioned further when the ten days were up. This experience taught me to be suspicious of all the people who came to the shop, as I thought they might be detectives or policemen. I became so worried that I could not sleep at night.

VII.

IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE POLICE AGAIN.

This state of things could not last forever, and within three months I was in the police station again. That first night in the police cells I slept as I had not slept since I escaped from prison. What I had dreaded had come to pass; my terror was gone and I was free from care.

I got five months in prison and should have known enough by this time to have behaved myself, but about forty days before my time was up I had a fight with one of the inmates and six months were added to my sentence. During this time my father died and my old mother was left alone. Well did I know that she was awaiting the return of her wayward son, counting off the days on her fingers until I should come back to her repentant, and yet I cared nothing for her suffering, and continued in my wrongdoing. Surely there was never a more ungrateful son than I!

When I came out I was just twenty-nine years of age. I returned home, and later, without consulting my mother, ransomed a prostitute and made her my wife. I straightened up, however, and started watch-making, a trade I had learned in prison; and my mother, my wife and I lived together happily for nearly three years, although we had very little to live on. During my days of wrongdoing I had never known what true happiness meant, even when I had plenty to

eat and drink, because there was no real peace in my heart.

All went well for a time, until one day a man I had known in prison came to see me, and by way of celebrating the occasion we took a drink together and then another, and another, until finally the lure* of the old life returned upon me and I started in on a course of crime again. My wife discovered what was going on and advised me to get away from Nagoya and move to Tokyo. At this time my mother was seventy-two years of age. I took my wife's advice, moved up to Tokyo with my family and rented a small house in Asakusa ward. This was in April, 1902. My wife began selling small wares, and I wandered about looking for work. I finally opened a bakeshop in Iriyamachi in Shitaya ward, but I knew nothing of the business and soon failed. Then one day I met an old pal in Asakusa ward and fell into temptation once more. Had I been really repentant I need not have fallen again, but the temptation came just when I had failed in business and was discouraged. Of course my repentance was only superficial.

* Literally: "Rust appeared on the iron again."

VIII.

ELEVEN YEARS IN PRISON

I now abandoned my wife and aged mother, committed a burglary, was caught and sent to prison for eleven years. As I had given a false name, my family had no way of tracing my whereabouts. What distress they must have endured on my account! I have no words to express the enormity of my unfilial conduct. I learned long afterwards, when I returned from prison, that my wife and mother went back to their old home in Nagoya, where my mother shortly afterwards died brokenhearted on account of her wayward son. This prison where I spent eleven years was in Chiba, a province bordering on Tokyo.

I wish to say something about my prison life during these years. I was not at all repentant, and determined to break prison and escape. After a great deal of trouble I got hold of a nail about an inch and a half long, sharpened it on the edge of a piece of earthenware, and made a gimlet with three turns in it. After twenty days' work I managed to bore a hole with it and break a lock. Three of us had planned to escape together, but the first to start out was caught by an official and our attempt came to nothing. This should have taught me a lesson, but instead I kept racking my brains to find some other means of escape. At last I succeeded in making a saw about three inches and a half long, smuggled it into my cell, and began to cut the bars of my window. When I had got the bars almost sawn

through, the plot was discovered and I was severely punished. I was hand-cuffed, my feet were chained together, and I was kept in that condition day and night for some time. This cruel treatment was, however, no more than I deserved.

When I had tried to escape six months before, the officials had been very lenient with me, so I had only myself to blame for the severe treatment I received this time. Had I been an ordinary mortal I should surely have repented and apologised to the officials, but I only got more desperate and paid no attention to anything that was said to me. I was being constantly punished for breaking rules. I thought all restraint was cruelty and was filled with hate against everyone. I could not even live in peace with the other inmates, but quarrelled and fought with them. Finally I was put into solitary confinement.

IX.

FROM BAD TO WORSE.

My solitary confinement had the effect of making me still more stubborn and unmanageable. I cursed my jailors, fought with them, smashed the furniture in my cell, and altogether acted like a madman. I was spoken of by the officials as an amazing scoundrel. One day I complained because I was being watched constantly. As I think of this today I realise how unreasonable it was to grumble about this, when I was constantly deceiving the officials and breaking rules. Needless to say, I was being punished all the time. Out of my eleven years' imprisonment I was at least half the time in solitary confinement, and I do not remember how many times I was punished otherwise.

The most severe form of punishment I endured, however, was to be deprived for ten days at a stretch, of the privilege of working. I was put into a cell all by myself, was not let out even for exercise, nor permitted to read nor to leave the cell day or night. Then besides all this I was not allowed to do any work. To anyone who has never gone through such an experience it may seem strange to think of enforced idleness as a punishment; but it is a fearful experience to be obliged to sit still for ten long days at a stretch without doing anything whatever. While working, the mind is active and one does not notice suffering. I was otherwise punished by being put on short rations and kept in a dark room, but these forms of punishment I did not mind at all.

X.

A CHRISTIAN OFFICIAL

One day when I had been in prison about seven years I got angry with an official for reprimanding me, and attacked him. For this I was gagged, my hands bound tightly behind me, and my body suspended so that my toes barely reached the ground. Through all this I remained stubborn and refused to say I was sorry for what I had done. Shall I call this just pure stubbornness, or was I an exceptionally hardened fellow?

During this period, which was about 1911, the vice-governor of the prison was said to be a Christian and had the reputation of being very kind. This I found to be true. One day while I was still enduring the terrible punishment I have described he came to my cell; and when he saw the plight I was in, he sent away the official in charge, untied the rope by which I was suspended, and let me down. He took the towel that was hanging at my belt and wiped the perspiration from my face. Before I knew it, the tears were rolling down my cheeks. That any one should treat a hardened criminal like myself with such kindness was more than I could bear, and from that time forward I was a completely changed man.

What a curious thing a man's heart is! In my perverse days I thought everyone, official and inmate alike, was against me, but when I myself changed, everyone else seemed to change also, and to grow kind

and considerate. After this, I received nothing but kindness from the officials.

Three years before my time was up, I received a good conduct badge from the prison governor, and made up my mind to reform when I was released. I decided to use the money I should receive from my prison work to start me up in some honest business. When I was finally freed I received about eighty yen. I may say that I received nothing for my first seven years' work.

XI.

A LETTER FROM A CHILD

Before I tell how it fared with me after I left prison, I want to go back and tell something about another convict who was in the same cell with me before I repented of my wrong-doing. The man was serving a nine years' sentence for burglary, and we were working out our time together. We were great pals and always consulted with each other about our prison escapades. One day the man was looking very unhappy, and tears were standing in his eyes. I was astonished, for I had never known him to be moved by anything, not even by the kind talks of the prison chaplain. I had never before seen even a suspicion of tears in his eyes, and I thought his present mood very strange. "What is wrong with you?" I asked him, but for some time he said nothing. I urged him further, and finally he said, "Brother, listen to me. Out in the world I have a wife, and a boy just nine years of age. I have just received a letter from the boy written in his childish hand, and I am finding out now for the first time what it means to to the little fellow to have his father in prison. He tells me that when any dispute arises at school, he is at once taunted by his schoolmates with the fact that his father is a thief and is in jail. He says he is so ashamed that as soon as school is over he hurries home, and never leaves the house again. When I read the letter, I was ashamed from the bottom of my heart."

I was not specially touched by this story and merely

said, "Are children such precious things as all that?" The man turned on me. "I may be a wicked man myself, but I want my boy to be good."

His tale did not touch me then, for I had no child of my own and my heart was still bad; but as I think about it today, I am overcome with emotion. What a wonderful thing is the love of a parent! What pain he will endure to bring a wayward child to repentance, even one as wicked as myself. Such love cannot be compared to anything in the world. When I look back and think that this man, a villain like myself, who had never been known to shed a tear, should be struck to the bottom of his heart by a mere letter from his little child; I cannot but think that the letters received from wife and family in prison must have far more influence on a man than the cleverest talks a prison chaplain can possibly give. According to the prison regulations a convict cannot receive a letter even from his own family, oftener than once in two months. I suppose nothing can be done to alter this, but it does seem to me that if home letters were given to the inmate at once, even the worst villain would behave better and perhaps find some incentive to reform. As a matter of fact, I myself saw this very thing happen before my own eyes. Feeling is not very deep in the heart of a criminal, and in my own case it was very shallow. This being so, if he does not receive letters from his family oftener than once in two months, his memories of home are bound to weaken, and he will be less likely to behave himself in prison. If the thought of wife and child is constantly in his heart I am quite sure he will not break prison rules.

The man I spoke of reformed after receiving his child's letter; but the many punishments he had suffered for his former misdemeanours had already weakened his body, and he died while still in prison. If he had behaved himself from the very first he might have returned to his family once more. Of course he was himself entirely to blame, for his death was the result of his own misbehaviour; but at the same time the suffering of his wife and child must have been very great. I weep tears of sympathy as I think of it now. I do not know where the man lived, but his name was Heisaburo Sasaki.

XII.

A LETTER FROM AN ACCOMPLICE

I shall now tell the cause of my next downfall, that it may serve to warn some other man in prison against the temptation into which I fell. Up to the day of my release I was resolved to reform. When I was leaving the prison I was given four or five letters that an old pal of mine had sent, but which had not been given to me until then. The real name was not signed but I knew at once from whom they came. I had intended to return to my home at once, but after reading the letters I decided to go to see this friend first. This resolve led to my downfall. Of course I see now that the real cause was my own weak will, but the truth remains that the letters made me take my first false step.

If these letters had been destroyed by the officials and not given to me at all, I might have gone straight home and not have fallen into the old ways again. If it is dangerous to let a man read letters from his pal while he is in prison, it is surely not less dangerous to give them to him when he is leaving. I do not say these things to grumble, but for the consideration of those who have such matters in charge.

I went to Tokyo and saw this friend, and we talked about the days we had been together in prison, and of the things that had happened after he left. He told me the whereabouts of another pal who had been a former accomplice, and I thought I would drop in on him also, and then go straight back to my own home in Nagoya.

This man, whose name was Sekiguchi, had been in the same workshop with me in Chiba prison. I went to his house in Honjo ward and found that he kept a laundry. He had a wife and child and two employés living in the house. We talked an hour or more about our life together in prison, and then my friend turned to me and said, "Ishii San*, where are you thinking of going now?" I told him I had made up my mind to behave myself and go back to my own home at once. "I am glad to hear that you have reformed and that you are going home," said he, "but it is raining now and getting late, so you had better stop with me over night and start on your journey in the morning." I consented, and that night we went out and had a drink together. Sekiguchi said to me, "Ishii San, if you have made up your mind to reform, it really makes no difference whether you stay in Tokyo or go back to your own home. If you decide to stay in Tokyo you can count on me to do what I can to help you."

I was easily persuaded, and within a week he had found a house in Fukagawa ward for me at a rent of six yen a month, and I set up a small cake shop. This happened about the end of October, 1914. I managed to make from about seventy sen to one yen † a day at this business. During the next four months Sekiguchi and I met often, drank together, talked of the old times, and before long we began to hatch new plots. I would not consent, however, to commit any crimes within the city, for I did not wish to bring trouble on Sekiguchi's wife and child.

* San—a term of friendly courtesy.
† Sen—a coin of the value of about half a cent: 100 sen = 1 yen.

XIII.

MY MONEY STOLEN

One day I was robbed of my money. In a fit of anger over the robbery I sold out my little shop and decided to leave Tokyo and return at once to my home in Nagoya. As I look back now, I think how foolish I was to be so furious at being robbed, when all the time I was robbing people myself. I should have known that others would feel the same way about me. I told Sekiguchi about my decision to go home, and he said, "Well, of course, if you are bound to go, I can't stop you; but if you happen to get your hands on anything down in the country, send it on to me. Only don't let my wife know anything about it." I assented in words, but I had really no intention of continuing my wrongdoing after I returned home.

I arrived in Nagoya about the third or fourth of February, 1915, and went at once to the old neighbourhood where I had lived thirteen or fourteen years before, but found everything changed, and no one who knew anything about my wife. I stayed at a hotel that night and in the evening visited Osu Kannon, the family temple. Later I got drunk, and in my drunkenness squandered half the money I possessed. *Sake* is called "lunatic's water" and it does seem to be that very thing! That a man over forty years of age as I was then, should spend his money on drink and rioting is too disgusting to think about.

XIV.

I FIND MY WIFE

The next day I discovered where my wife lived, but when I went to see her, I found that she belonged to another man. She had not heard anything of me after I had been put into prison eleven years before, and she naturally thought I was either dead or had forsaken her. She had married again about three years before I turned up. She was very much astonished to see me, and she told me some of the things that had happened during my absence, and especially about my mother's death. Her husband was not at home that day, and as she did not expect him back at night she asked me to stay with her as she had much more to tell me. I refused, however, because I had caused her enough trouble already, without breaking up her second home, as I surely would have done had I stayed in the house while her husband was absent. She belonged to him and not to me, for I had basely forsaken her for more than eleven years. My wife was now mine no longer, and my mother was dead, so there was no one left in all the world who would ever give me a thought.

While I was in prison I believed in a god called Kompira Sama. I decided to take a journey to Shikoku and worship at the shrine there. What made me wish to go? Had some sort of superstition got hold of me? At any rate as I journeyed along on my way, I committed all kinds of crimes. I wonder how the true God would look on worship offered under such circumstances!

XV.

I GO TO KOMPIRA SHRINE.

I passed through Ise on my way from Nagoya and got as far as Kyoto. By this time I had less than five yen left in my pocket and I began to feel a little lonely. I then remembered that Sekiguchi had told me of a friend of his that lived in Osaka, so I made my way over there, and found the man living in a certain hotel.

I put up at the same place, but within a week my money was all gone, and I had to give up my idea for the time being of going to Kompira Shrine. I was weak willed, and wicked thoughts soon rose in my heart again. I then recalled that Sekiguchi had suggested that if I picked up anything on my journeys I might send it on to him. I got hold of some stuff, sent it by freight to Tokyo and marked it "to be called for." I did not send the goods to his house in case the theft should be discovered by the neighbours, and his wife implicated, for I did not wish to cause trouble to her. I plunged into my old ways again, and sent everything I stole to Tokyo.

Not long after arriving in Osaka I committed a burglary, assaulted the inmates, and stole about thirty yen. It would have been difficult to account for having so much money on me when I had no visible means of support; so I laid in a small stock of cakes, carried them with me and made a pretence of being a peddling confectioner. I then set out from Osaka. Along the

way I deposited a little money now and then in the post office savings bank, and took care to have the passbook always with me. In this way I hoped to allay any suspicions the police might have of me, for the passbook would show that I was an honest man and saving money.

I wandered from place to place, and at last reached Okayama where I committed two burglaries. But there the judgment of Heaven fell upon me. My feet gave out and I was compelled to rest for a few days. I started on again, however, and gradually made my way to Amagi where I put up at a house where only filthy beggars stayed. I did not mind this myself, but when I went to the public bath I was refused admittance on account of it. This led to a quarrel with the owner and his wife, which resulted in my being arrested and taken to the police station. Being an old hand I knew I must first of all establish confidence, and so I showed my post office passbook to the police. The scheme succeeded and I was let off.

But I must tell you here what thoughts were in my heart at this time. Although I had escaped the police, I still was very angry at the bath-house man and his wife for daring to refuse me admittance when I had money to pay, and I vowed then and there to return some day and kill off the whole bath-house family. I tremble now when I think of my determination to murder a whole family simply because they had annoyed me.

After this, I took a small steamer and went from Tanoguchi to Shikoku, stopped one night at Marugame, and from there went on to Kompira Shrine,

which I had originally set out to visit. I worshipped there, and then made my way back to Osaka by way of Takamatsu. Here I started my criminal ways once more. I sold my cake shop outfit and decided to return to Tokyo to see Sekiguchi. When I got as far as Kyoto, however, I fell into the hands of a detective and was examined. I showed my passbook and got off without any trouble. I was again held up by the police at Yokkaichi, but managed to deceive them also in the same way. I then went to Kuwana in Ise, and that very night a terrible storm occurred. This seemed to offer a good chance for committing some depredation. About midnight I stole out very quietly, but soon realised that someone was following me. I suddenly heard a loud voice calling, "Stop, stop!" It goes without saying that I did not stop, but made my escape as quickly as I could. I plunged into another path, succeeded in committing the crime I had planned to do, waited around till morning and returned by train to Nagoya. This happened on the twentieth of April, 1915.

On the twenty-third, I went back to Tokyo and found Sekiguchi in great distress. He had been gambling and had either sold or pawned all the stuff I had stolen and sent up to him from the country; he had dismissed his last employé, had run into debt, and could scarcely support his family. It was difficult for him to confess to me that he had been gambling, and he simply told me that business had not been good. I knew of course that he was lying, and that he had lost his money by gambling, but I pretended to believe him.

One day, however, he said to me, "Ishii San, to tell you the truth, I am very hard up. Can't we do something to help matters out?" I felt sorry for him and promised to do what I could.

XVI.

THE MURDER OF OHARU, THE GEISHA

On the morning of the twenty-ninth of April I went to Yokohama by street car thinking to try my hand at something there. Somehow or other I did not feel in the mood for doing anything desperate, and I wandered about the town for a while and then started to walk back along the Tokaido railroad. About ten o'clock at night I got as far as Suzugamori, a suburb of Tokyo, and sat down to rest in front of a teahouse, which was closed for the night. Just at that moment a young woman twenty-four or twenty-five years of age came in sight, walking along by herself. I was suddenly seized with an overmastering passion, and when I had taken a quick glance about to see that no one was in sight, I sprang up and seized hold of her. The girl gave a loud scream and shouted, "Murder! Murder!" To stop her cries I snatched the towel that hung at my belt, twisted it around her neck and dragged her forward a few feet. To make sure she would not raise her voice again, I kept tightening the towel, and finally she ceased to breathe. I then looked into the girl's kimono sleeve and found a purse containing about thirty-six yen and a small book which I took possession of, and escaped from the place. As I look back now I realise how awful the fascination of lust is!

More than this! What shall I say of myself as I realise that because of my escape, suspicion was

fastened on her lover, who was supposed to have killed her in a fit of jealousy? Shall I not call myself the worst villain that ever lived? As I look back upon the self who committed that awful crime, my present self recoils in horror, and the hair of my body stands up on end at the thought of my terrible sins. How awful it was! The blame fell on the innocent Komori, the girl's lover, who was confined in prison for many months for the crime I had committed. (As a matter of fact, however, I did not know this until some time later.)

On the morning of the thirtieth, I returned to Tokyo to Sekiguchi's house and loafed about for four or five days as if nothing had happened. About the seventh of May I started out again on my wanderings, went to Nagoya and committed a burglary with assault. Before leaving the house I tied the hands and feet of my victims and left them in that condition. How heartless and unfeeling I was!

About the middle of May I returned again to Tokyo. I began to think, however, that if I fooled about much longer and did nothing, I might be suspected by the neighbourhood. So I made a pretence of doing business, but charged about ten per cent less than the cost price in order to gain the good will of the people round about.

XVII.

THE YOKOHAMA MURDER.

About the fourteenth or fifteenth of June I began to wander again, and this time took the train from Shinagawa to Yokohama, thinking to commit some robbery. On the night of the eighteenth I broke into a certain house, bound the inmates, and tried by threats to force the wife to tell me where their money was. At this the man began to shout, "Thief! thief!" whereupon, as I knew it would be the end of me if the neighbourhood heard, I seized a towel that was hanging in the room, and twisted it around his neck. The wife, seeing me do this, summoned up her strength and shouted with all her might, "Murder! murder!" At this I seized a narrow *obi* * that was hanging in the room and strangled her also.

Just then I heard a voice from a neighbouring house, and taking time only to seize the woman's gold watch which was lying near, I made my escape. As I think of this today I realise what an awful villain I was. Had I been just an ordinary bad man, I should probably have fled when the man shouted for help, but I simply courted danger. When the wife saw her husband killed before her eyes, what an awful horror it must have been! Anyone would have shouted for help as she did. And yet for doing that I killed her. As I think back on this today, I wonder if the woman's hate could have been appeased even if my body had been cut in pieces.

* A Japanese woman's girdle.

After leaving the house I walked along the Tokaido railroad for a while, broke into another house, stole some things, and sent them to Sekiguchi. Later on I went to Motoyoshiwara, stole again and sent this stuff to Tokyo. At Iwabuchi I was walking along about midnight, thinking to do something, when a policeman suddenly appeared and stopped me. There seemed no way of escape, so I went along with the policeman, taking advantage of the darkness, however, to drop my dagger by the side of the road. When I was examined at the police station, I showed my passbook and as usual was let off. I retraced my steps, picked up the dagger I had dropped by the roadside, and walked on. As the night was very dark I stumbled and fell headlong into a river thirteen or fourteen feet below me. I broke a rib, but managed to crawl out as far as a strawstack in a nearby field; and lay there for three days and three nights unable to move, and without anything to eat or drink. I thought I should die, but I finally recovered, although I was not able to commit any more crimes for some time.

After this I gradually made my way to Hamamatsu and there put up at a cheap lodging house. When I had been there about a week I came across a woman, abandoned by her husband, with an eleven-year-old child. She was in great straits and had sold not only her own clothes to pay for her lodgings, but those of the child also. Hardened sinner though I was, I felt sorry for her and gave her money to pay her debts. I stayed on for three or four days longer, and during that time I showed her the book I had found in the sleeve of the geisha I murdered in Suzugamori. Dur-

ing my trial this woman was found and brought up from Hamamatsu to testify in court that she had seen this book in my possession. This witness, presented at a time when my confession was not believed, served as evidence that I had committed the crime at Suzugamori. I gave the woman enough money to set up a little soap shop, and with that I left her.

By this time I had recovered sufficiently to go back to my evil ways again, but just as I was ready to start off I was stopped by a detective. I showed my passbook and also a letter of sympathy I had received from Sekiguchi on account of my accident, and I got off once more without any trouble.

XVIII.

I STEAL WEAPONS TO COMMIT FURTHER CRIMES.

I visited Inari shrine, and while there noticed a sword shop directly in front of the temple gate, so I broke into the shop that night and stole a sword about three feet long and a dagger nearly a foot long. One night about the end of July, I went to Toyohashi, and about two in the morning I was standing in front of a coal shop in a certain street, having a look at the place with the thought of breaking in if I could. Suddenly I heard a loud voice call, "Robber! robber!" and an attempt was made by a band of policemen to seize me. I drew the sword and began to fight with might and main. After about fifteen minutes I wounded one of the policemen seriously, but managed to escape with only a slight wound myself. I had a notion, however, that the place was probably surrounded by a cordon of police, and I made toward the river Toyogawa which was not far away. This river was about one hundred and eighty feet wide, and although deep was not very swift. I drew my clothes up over my head to keep them as dry as possible, and swam across.

What shall I say of this evil self of mine? Knowing full well the unspeakable suffering and distress I was causing, I still went on. Shall I call it stupidity or mere heartlessness? Words fail to describe what an abandoned fellow I was.

Later I made my way to Okazaki, went to a mountain near by, hid my dagger, and later on went by day-

light to the spot to get it. I suddenly ran into two men who looked like detectives. They asked me what business had brought me to the place, and I made a random reply: "Oh, I work at the menagerie in Nagoya, and yesterday I carelessly let a hawk escape and am looking for it." This reply seemed to satisfy the men and they let me go.

That same evening about nine o'clock I started again for the mountain to get my dagger. Three or four men suddenly sprang on me, and with loud voices shouted, "We have something to say to you." The sudden onslaught took my breath away and I drew a knife I had on me and began to fight wildly. I wounded one of them and then made my escape before assistance could be summoned from the neighbourhood. I rushed towards the Tonosamagawa, a river about sixty feet wide, swam across, ran about five miles in the darkness, and by dawn arrived at a place called Koromo, where I caught the stage for Nagoya, which was about fifteen miles distant.

One of the passengers was a Koromo police official who was going to Nagoya on business, and I overheard him telling a fellow passenger about the crime I had committed at Toyohashi. Of course I gave no sign that I heard the conversation, but I was greatly alarmed and felt the journey of fifteen miles a very long one. Now an ordinary person would feel unusually secure while travelling in the same coach with a police official, and the fact that I was nearly scared to death under those circumstances, is a revelation, as I think of it now, of the guilty conscience that I had.

XIX.

FLIGHT TO OSAKA.

We arrived in Nagoya towards evening. I stayed there over night, and early in the morning started out to commit some new crime. As I was passing the gate of the Nishihonganji temple I noticed four or five beggars sitting together in very earnest conversation. I had no special intention of listening, but could not help overhearing, and I learned that they were talking about the crimes I had just committed in Toyohashi and Okazaki. I made some casual inquiries of them, and was told that two or three days before, robberies had been committed at both Toyohashi and Okazaki, that two policemen had been injured, and that the robber had escaped. The thief was supposed to be in Nagoya, and the police in searching for him had been bothering these very beggars.

Under these circumstances Nagoya seemed a rather dangerous place for me, especially as I had no visible means of support. So I bought a scissors-grinder's outfit, and set out with it along the Tokaido railroad towards the west. I journeyed on, passing through Kyoto to Osaka, where I remained about ten days. I here recalled the insult I had received from the bath-house man and his wife at Amagi, and as the place was near by, I decided to go over and wreak vengeance on them as I had planned. What an awful heart I had!

I want to tell here how the police came to know

that I had hidden a dagger in the mountain near Okazaki, and so had lain in wait for me. That very day a farmer of the neighbourhood had found it in the rice straw where I had hidden it and notified the police at once. The police had the dagger already in their possession and were guarding the place when I encountered them.

I shall now go on with my story. I left Osaka and got as far as Kobe when once more the judgment of Heaven fell upon me. My eyes gave out and I became almost blind, so that for some time I could do no more mischief. Nevertheless I was determined that somehow or other I was going to get to that bath-house, and I set out, although I could scarcely see. I got as far as a place called Akashi, when my eyes got very much worse and I could go no further. I got some eye medicine, but it did me no good, so I decided to go back to Tokyo. I sent a letter to Sekiguchi asking him to send me five yen, and towards the end of October I returned by train to Tokyo.

The condition of Sekiguchi's home was unspeakable in its misery. Not only had he pawned the stolen goods I had sent him from the country, but the very clothes of his wife and child were gone. There was not a single change of clothing in the house. My eyes were still weak and I could not go out and steal anything for them, so I sold all the spare clothing I had and gave them the money to help them out. I went to the Mitsui Charity Hospital for treatment, and by the beginning of November I was fairly well again.

XX.

FIRST CRIME IN TOKYO.

One day Sekiguchi said to me, "Ishii San, I am desperate! I cannot pay this month's bills, and I must get money somehow. Let us start out and see what we can do in Tokyo." Now my eyes were still troubling me, and besides, I hesitated to do anything in Tokyo for fear the results would recoil on Sekiguchi's innocent wife and child. Also I had never committed a crime within the city and I was unwilling to begin.

I agreed to help Sekiguchi provided it were outside the city, but he assured me there was not the slightest danger of getting caught. I could not very well go alone into the country with my eyes in their present state, and as I saw the suffering of the family every day before my very eyes, I finally agreed to help Sekiguchi inside the city. In so doing I only added sorrow to his wife and child, and as I look back now, I feel a very deep compassion for them.

One night Sekiguchi and I went together to Fukagawa ward and attempted to enter a certain house. The servant was aroused, however, and began to throw things at us until we were obliged to flee. I was so angry that I determined to return some day and burn the house down. Looking back now I cannot but think what a mean wretch I was! The servant, mindful only of his duty to his master, surely showed a

loyal spirit in protecting his master's belongings from the thieves who broke into the house, and yet I had no other feeling than hate for him. What a fool I was!

XXI.

CONFESSION OF OHARU'S MURDER.

After this it was not safe for either of us to go back to Sekiguchi's house, and on the eighth of December we decided to start off together for the country. But the wrath of Heaven overtook us. That evening when we returned to our lodgings, five policemen were waiting for us. Caught unawares, we were soon arrested and taken to the police station. We were arrested on suspicion for our attempted burglary in Fukagawa ward; but as there was no special evidence against us, I thought I could easily deceive the authorities as I had so often done before, and get free again.

I was put into a police cell with seven or eight other men who were talking among themselves about some murders that had been committed around Tokyo. This and that murderer had been arrested, they said, and among them they mentioned a man named Komori who was being tried for the murder of a geisha at Suzugamori. When I heard this, I said to myself, "How can they be trying Komori for this murder, when it was I who did it?" For a moment I doubted my own ears, but upon inquiry found that the men knew the facts, and that it was actually true that an innocent man was being tried for the Oharu murder.

I began to think. When I was arrested and sentenced for my crimes I hated policemen and detectives, judges and procurators, and was always dissatisfied with the sentences I received, in spite of the fact that

I really committed the crimes. Everyone who commits crime has the same feeling. What then must be the feeling and the suffering of this innocent Komori as he lay in prison for months, accused of a crime he did not commit? What about his family and relatives? I cannot express by word of mouth, nor in any shape or form, the agony that must have been theirs. I kept on thinking. After all, a human being must die once any way, and so I decided to confess my guilt, and save the innocent Komori.

Three or four days after I had confessed the murder, but while I was still in the police station, a man from Okazaki was put into the same cell with me. I asked him when he had been last in Okazaki, and when he said he had been there in July, I inquired if anything had happened about that time. He replied that nothing special had occurred except that there had been a robbery in Toyohashi, and a policeman had been killed. A fight between a robber and the police had also taken place at Okazaki about the same time; another policeman had been killed, and the robber had escaped. Until I heard this I did not know that I had killed the policemen. I thought I had only wounded them. I decided that I might as well make a clean breast of all my crimes, which I did at once.

I was transferred from the police station to the prison where I am now writing this story, on the thirtieth of December, 1915. As I look back now, I see that all this was the working of God's providence. Of course at the time I knew nothing of God's heart, but I firmly believe now that God had already fathomed the depths of mine.

XXII.

MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS.

Up to this point I have given in outline the story of my life from my childhood on through my life of crime; but just here I wish to go back and tell something of the life I lived before I was put into Chiba prison in 1904. The crimes that were found out were only a small fraction of the depredations I actually committed, and at the time I considered myself very fortunate to escape the law. As I look back now I see that there was not such another sinner in all the world. From the time I was nineteen years of age I looked upon other people's belongings as if they were my own, and I took their property, not once or twice, but times without number.

I have endured at times untold misery and distress. Once when I was chased by detectives I escaped to the mountains where I hid for eight days, with nothing whatever to eat, and only water to drink. In the depths of winter I have spent snowy nights out in the open fields. I have been nearly devoured by mosquitoes in the hot summer nights. I have endured privations and hardships of all kinds. As I think back now, I see that there is nothing so futile as crime. Had I expended the same amount of energy and endured the same hardships for the sake of making an honest living I might have made a success of my life. How useless it was to suffer so for the sake of crime! I have not only endured untold hardships myself, but I have caused

suffering to others, and in the end nothing remains that I can call my own. I have not a single possession left me but my evil deeds and my crimes, and from these I shall never be able to separate myself.

I wish to add that the policemen I injured at Toyohashi and Okazaki did not die.

XXIII.

AFTER DEATH?

Let me now tell how I came to believe from the bottom of my heart in the teachings of Jesus Christ, after I got into prison. I want to tell everything just as it happened, without concealment and without decoration. People of learning who read this story may find much in it that does not seem consistent, but I ask such people to try to sympathise with the efforts of an uneducated fellow to reveal his heart just as it is.

At the end of December, 1915, I was removed from the police station to Tokyo prison. In order to atone for my sins I had confessed everything, and I felt that my life was already ended. Day by day I sat alone in my cell with no one to talk to, and with nothing to do. One night when everyone was asleep, and the prison was silent, I suddenly wakened and began to think of all the unmentionable sins I had ever committed. To be sure I had given myself up to die when I confessed my sins, but now in the darkness I began to think of what would happen if I should die just as I was. Where should I go? Was there such a thing as a soul? I did not know, but if there were, must mine not go to Hell? Surely this was a dark future for me, and as I thought of it I was filled with an anguish I could scarcely bear. In the days of my strength, when I was concerned only with lust and

money, such thoughts never entered my head; but now with certain death staring me in the face, my agony was heavier than I could bear. I solemnly affirm that I speak the truth when I say this.

XXIV.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT IN PRISON.

The year 1915 closed and the first day of the New Year opened. Early in the morning a special New Year's meal * was brought to me instead of the ordinary prison fare, and I was told that two ladies by the names of Miss West and Miss Macdonald had sent it to me. Who could these two persons be, I wondered. I had never seen nor heard of them before. There was no reason why I should receive anything from people I did not know, and I told the official that I could not accept the gift. The official said that these ladies were Christian missionaries, and had sent the food out of kindness and sympathy, and so I need not hesitate to accept it. As I look back now I cannot but think how perverse is the heart of a wicked man! It cannot be described either by word or by parable. When I was out in the world I robbed people without compunction, but now when something is offered to me freely, I naïvely refuse it. What kind of foolish perversion can this be?

The food was sent to me during the first three days of the New Year. A few days later a New Testament and two or three other Christian books were received from the same source, but I put them up on the shelf and did not even look into them.

* During the first three days of the New Year, which are universally celebrated in Japan, everyone, even down to the poorest, eats a certain kind of rice food, called *mochi*, specially prepared for the occasion.

XXV.

A VISIT FROM MISS WEST.

One day a person by the name of Miss West came purposely to visit me, and talked to me about Jesus Christ. I shall tell you exactly what I thought at that time. When I was out in the world I had not listened seriously even to talks about my own religion, and so naturally I had never wanted to hear about Christianity. Although I thought it was very kind of Miss West to come to talk to me, I did not pay much attention to what she said. Of course I behaved with decorum as the occasion demanded. These visits continued from time to time.

XXVI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

One day I got tired of sitting by myself with nothing to do, and just for the sake of putting in the time, I took the New Testament down from the shelf, and, with no intention of seriously looking into it, I glanced at the beginning and then at the middle. I was casually turning over the leaves when I came across a place that looked rather interesting and I began to read:—

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face; and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

I laid the book down thinking that these were surely the words of some one who wanted to teach men the path of virtue, but otherwise I was not specially moved by them. Later on I picked up the book again and read these words:

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep that was lost! I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

Still I was not sufficiently impressed to have any special belief in what I was reading. I simply thought these were words that any preacher might use. I put the New Testament on the shelf again and did not read any more for some time. A little later, when I was tired of doing nothing, I took the book down once more and began to read. This time I read how Jesus was handed over to Pilate by his enemies, was tried unjustly and put to death by crucifixion.

As I read this I began to think. This person they called Jesus was evidently a man who at any rate tried to lead others into the path of virtue, and it seemed an inhuman thing to crucify him simply because he had different religious opinions from others. Even I, hardened criminal that I was, thought it a shame that his enemies should have treated him in this way.

XXVII.

"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!"

I went on, and my attention was next taken by these words: *And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* I stopped: I was stabbed to the heart, as if pierced by a five-inch nail. What did the verse reveal to me? Shall I call it the love of the heart of Christ? Shall I call it His compassion? I do not know what to call it. I only know that with an unspeakably grateful heart, I believed. Through this simple sentence I was led into the whole of Christianity.

This is how I thought it out:—I suppose a man's greatest enemy is the one who seeks to take his life from him. There is surely no greater enemy than this. Now at the very moment when Jesus' life was being taken from him, he prayed for his enemies to the God of Heaven. *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.* What else could I believe but that he was indeed the son of God? I argued that an ordinary man is filled with anger and hatred and every other spiteful passion on the slightest provocation. Jesus, on the other hand, prayed for his enemies at the very moment his life was being taken,—that life which was so precious that nothing could take its place. Was an act like this possible for an ordinary man? I do not think so. Then we cannot but say that he was God.

Again, chaplains and pastors, and those who see men die, agree that the last words a man utters come from

the depths of his soul, and that he does not die with lies upon his lips. Jesus' last words were, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,* and so I cannot but believe that they reveal his true heart.

XXVIII.

GIFTS OF THE PRISON HOUSE.

I want to tell you what divine favours were given me after I became a believer in Christ. First I received the imperishable and everlasting salvation of that most important part of man, his soul. As it is written: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* And again: *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.* If we believe these words then we know that God has not forsaken us but has saved our souls forever.

It was only after I got into prison that I came to believe that man really has a soul, and I shall tell you how I came to see this. In the prison yard chrysanthemums have been planted to please the eyes of the inmates. When the season comes they bear beautiful flowers, but in the winter they are nipped by the frost, and wither. Our outer eye tells us that the flowers are dead, but this is not the real truth. When the season returns the buds sprout once more and the beautiful flowers bloom again. And so I cannot but believe that if God in his mercy does not allow even the flowers to die, there surely is a soul in man which He intends shall live forever.

I shall now speak of a second favour which I have received from God. When I was free I travelled about west and east out in the world, and saw and heard

many things, and had varied experiences. Today I am sitting in my prison cell with no liberty to come and go, and yet I am far more contented than in the days of my freedom. In prison, with only poor, coarse food to eat, I am more thankful than I ever was out in the world when I could get whatever food I wanted. In this prison cell, only nine by six feet in size, I am happier than if I were living in the largest house I ever saw in the outer world. Whatever agony is in my heart I can now overcome. No matter what discomforts I endure there is only gladness in my heart. The joy of each day is very great. These things are all due to the grace and divine favour of Jesus Christ.

I wish to speak now of the greatest favour of all,—the power of Christ, which cannot be measured by any of our standards. I have been more than twenty years in prison since I was nineteen years of age, and during that time I have known what it meant to endure suffering, although I have had some pleasant times as well. I have passed through all sorts of experiences, and have been urged often to repent of my sins. In spite of this, however, I did not repent, but on the contrary became more and more hardened. And then by the power of that one word of Christ's, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,* my unspeakably hardened heart was changed, and I repented of all my crimes. Such power is not in man.

XXIX.

CRUCIFIXION.

I want to speak for a moment about some thoughts I have concerning crucifixion. Even in Japan there was once a man, by the name of Sogoro Sakura,* who endured crucifixion for the sake of others. He is said to have given his life to save the people of a certain small district of Chiba province. I saw the story played once at a theatre, and even I, heartless fellow that I was, pitied him and thought it was a cruel thing to have put him to death. The people of Chiba have erected a shrine and have made him into a kind of god.

As I think this story over very carefully today, it seems to me that if a man is worshipped today as a

* The story of Sogoro Sakura is one of the most famous in all the annals of Japan. The outline, as told in Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*, is as follows: A certain feudal lord taxed his farmers so outrageously that the chiefs of one hundred and thirty-six villages held council and petitioned against the oppression. Neither the local officials nor the lord himself, paid any attention to the grievance; and so in despair one of the village chiefs, Sogoro by name, determined to risk his life in an attempt to get the petition into the hands of the Shogun, who was the head of all the feudal lords and the chief executive of the nation. Accordingly, as the Shogun was proceeding one day in his litter, to worship at the tombs of his ancestors, Sogoro sprang forward from his hiding place, broke through the escort, and handed the petition directly to the Shogun. He was arrested and sentenced to death, along with his wife and his three little sons, for the crime of appealing to the Shogun over the head of his own feudal chief. The unjust taxes were, however, remitted.

The day of execution came on the ninth day of the second month of the year 1644. The children were beheaded before their parents' eyes, and then Sogoro and his wife were bound to two crosses and speared to death. They both died bravely, sustaining each other with the thought that their death was not in vain, as the taxes had been remitted. Sogoro, however, with his last breath cursed his lord for having punished his wife and children as well as himself, and said, "Let my lord fence himself in with iron walls, yet shall my spirit burst through them, and crush his bones, as a reward for this deed." When he was dead, his head turned and faced the castle, and afterwards his ghost and that of his wife haunted the feudal house, and wrought terrible havoc. The lord's wife died of horror at the awful sights she saw in the night, and the lord himself was well-nigh crazed. Finally a shrine was built and Sogoro was deified. The ghosts then ceased to wander, and peace reigned once more in the castle.

god because long ago he gave his life for a few people in a small community; how much more must we think of Christ who gave himself for the sake of the whole world? To be sure I am not saying these things to lessen the reputation of Sogoro Sakura. What I think of him is this,—he gave his life in a most chivalrous way, and he was undoubtedly much nobler than the ordinary man; but I cannot think that his sacrifice was the deed of a god. He gave his life to save the bodies of men, but he could not save their souls.

As I saw the story on the stage, Sogoro, when he was being crucified, turned to his executioners, who were the retainers of the feudal lord who had ordered his death, and said, "Though my body dies, I shall still be revenged upon you." With these words on his lips he died. Afterwards, it is said, his ghost haunted the feudal lord and his retainers and harassed them exceedingly. This spirit is quite characteristic of human nature.

Christ, on the other hand, came to save men's souls as well as their bodies. Sogoro suffered the death penalty for a breach of the law of that day, but he left a curse behind. Jesus broke no law, but his sinless body was crucified because of the hatred of his enemies. I also believe that Jesus understood beforehand that his death was to be a ransom for sinners that they might be saved. Therefore there was no hate in his heart even when he was being crucified; and he left behind him only words of compassion, and died with a peaceful heart. If Japanese people make a god out of Sogoro, why do they not believe in Jesus Christ

who died with such a heart of love? It seems a very strange thing.

As I know the life of Sogoro only as I saw it on the stage, I may have been mistaken in some of the details of the story.

XXX.

THE OHARU TRIAL.

My trial for the murder of Oharu dragged on for many long days and months, and I was finally acquitted in the first court on account of some mistake. I was greatly disheartened about this for a time, for I knew that if I were acquitted, the innocent Komori would suffer the penalty of the crime. I was so distressed about it that I could not sleep at nights.

By this time, however, I had faith in God, and so I reasoned it out in this way. The case will never be settled by man's power, so I must pray day and night unceasingly that it be settled by the power of God. The lawyer I had during this first trial was not satisfactory, but during the appeal * I had a new lawyer, Mr. Suzuki, who was very sympathetic. Also I knew that Miss Macdonald and Miss West were praying for me, and I believe God used their prayers to pierce through the heart of the judge; for in the appeal court I received the fair impartial judgment of God. This was not through man's power, but as I firmly believe, the power of God.

* According to Japanese criminal law, the procurator as well as the defendant can appeal against a judgment in the lower court. In the case of Ishii, the procurator appealed against the acquittal and secured in the appeal court the verdict of a death sentence.

XXXI.

PRISON CHAPLAINS.

While the trial in Tokyo was still in progress, I was sent to Yokohama to stand my trial for the murder I had committed there. Two or three days before Miss Macdonald came to visit me there, two of the prison chaplains sent for me to ask about my birth place and the religious sect to which I belonged. I said that my parents had belonged to the Shin sect of Buddhism.

"Then of course you belong to the same sect?" asked one of the priests.

"No," I replied, "my religion is different; I believe in Christianity."

"Tell me," said the chaplain, "why have you turned to the Christian God?"

"From the most sincere motives," I replied.

The chaplain went on, "But Christianity is, after all, nothing but morals. Now Buddha receives you with love and mercy, and so there is more reason to be thankful to him than to Christ."

"That may be quite true," I replied, "but it is also true that there are love and mercy in Christ as well. What you have just said may be true, but if I had experienced the love and benevolence which you say are in the heart of Buddha, I should not have committed the crimes I have done. But with neither love nor mercy in my own heart I have experienced the love and mercy of Christ, and so now I turn to the Christian God." The two priests laughed and ended the

conversation without saying anything further. As I think this over, I am reminded of the proverb, "Drawing water to your own rice field," * and I think it very aptly describes their attitude in this talk.

A little later on I was called to the office of the head chaplain and asked again about my birthplace and religion. I replied as before that I was a Christian. The priest then asked me, "Has your heart been changed by Christianity?" and I said that it had. And then, as might be expected of one in his position, he said, "Then your religion is an admirable thing. There is nothing better than the teaching that changes a man's heart." Now it seems to me that this chaplain was a man to be very greatly respected.

* Arguing to put the other in the wrong.

XXXII.

HAUNTED.

I wish to speak for a moment about the awfulness of sin. As I sat in my prison cell I was taken up with many things during the day, and was not troubled very much about my sins, but when night came and everyone else was asleep, I would waken and begin to think about all the terrible things I had done. This was before I came to believe in Christ. It was all very terrible.

One night one of my victims, with a very pale face, suddenly appeared by my pillow and called me by name, and then began to stroke my face. Awful criminal though I was, I was terrified, but when I opened my eyes I found it was only a dream. The apparition, however, appeared plainly before my eyes. Even after I was fully awake my hair stood on end with fright, and I could sleep no more that night. It was an awful experience. After I came to believe in Christ this thing never happened again; although even now when I think of it, the hair of my body stands on end.

Another night when everyone but myself was asleep, I suddenly heard a dreadful groan from a nearby cell; and during the night it was repeated several times. It was so fearsome that it terrified even me. Such sounds continued every night for some time, and I came to the conclusion that the man who was groaning was a murderer like myself; and that the

ghost of his victim had come to terrify him. He had probably not repented of his sins and so was being haunted. He must have suffered during the day as well, for I had suffered agony both day and night before I received the teachings of Christ. I knew his distress would soon cease, however, if, like me, he would cling to God's hand; and I felt sorry that there was no one to help him.

XXXIII.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN.

It is commonly said that as men's faces are different, so men's hearts are different also; and I had cause recently to realise how very great the difference is, between one man and another.

On the eighth day of April, 1918, about three o'clock in the afternoon, I was sitting in my cell reading, when suddenly two officials appeared at the door. One was an officer of this prison, but the other was unknown to me, and so I merely bowed respectfully when they entered. I was then told that the strange official was Governor Arima of Kosuge prison. He began to talk to me. "Ishii San," he said, "I hear you have become a believer in Christ?" I replied that I had, and he said, "Then you believe that you have been saved by Christ?" I told him without reserve what I had come to believe about the love and mercy of Christ. The governor continued, "Christ's wonderful power belongs not only to past days, but is just as truly here in this very cell now, as it ever was long ago. The change that Christ has made in your heart is as great a miracle as anything that ever happened." He talked to me in a way I could easily understand; and when he was leaving, he took off his glove, grasped me by the hand and bade me good-bye with the gentlest and kindest words. I was so touched that I could not keep back my tears of gratitude, and for some time after

he left I could not raise my head. That night I did not sleep a wink.*

Such is the difference among men. Here am I, looking like an ordinary man, it is true, but having the heart of a beast. There is Governor Arima, a man of high rank and office, deliberately taking off his glove and grasping the hand of an utterly worthless and abandoned criminal like myself; and thereby showing his heart of compassion. What a contrast!

My lawyer in Yokohama, Mr. Fujita by name, once grasped me by the hand when he parted from me. One of my lawyers in Tokyo, Mr. Suzuki, has also the same kind heart. They have shown their sympathy in many ways. They did my legal work for me without any charge whatever, and time and again sent special food to the prison for me. Dead or alive, I shall never forget their good will.

Between the heart of a man just moderately good and my own there is a very great difference. How much greater then is the contrast between myself and

* Mr. Arima himself, in the preface to the Japanese edition, describes this same visit as follows: "One day I went to see Ishii in his cell and found him sitting bolt upright and looking very serious. My first glance showed him to be a very powerfully built fellow, with heavy bushy eyebrows and a large flat nose; and I could not help thinking that if his heart were as rough as his exterior, one would have every right to fear him. But his eyes told a different story. They shone with a quiet, beautiful light, his cheeks were clear and healthy looking and his spirit was brimming over with gentleness. My heart went out to him with a great tenderness.

"As I knew I should never see him again in this world's life, I spoke a few words of encouragement to him, and at parting pledged myself to meet him in the next world. As I made the promise I involuntarily put out my hand and grasped his. His joy was beyond words to describe.

"The day he was taken out to die he left with the Buddhist chaplain a letter which he had begun to write to me but had not finished. In it he expressed his appreciation of my visit and said that his soul would never forget my kindness even when his body was dead. He was especially moved by the handshake. 'I have lived a life of crime for more than twenty years,' he wrote, 'but never in all that time did I hear of a prison governor expressing his sympathy towards a criminal by actually taking off his glove and grasping him by the hand. My joy can be expressed only by the tears of gratitude which I shed.'"

MR. SHIROSUKE ARIMA

Governor of Kosuge Prison, Tokyo

the man who actively tries to bring happiness to others! The contrast is as great as between the west and the east, or as between heaven and earth.

As I think it all out now I see that I am worse than a beast. The cat and the dog are of some use to man. The wild animal of the mountain is useful when he is dead for his fur and flesh if for nothing else. I have been not only of no use to anyone, but have done untold harm. Dead or alive, I am of no value whatever. I can compare myself to nothing but a tuberculosis germ; I have been but a plague to people. I feel ashamed to show my face. If there were only a hole somewhere I should like to crawl in and hide myself. Nevertheless, when I realise that I have lived until today to receive the gracious love of God, there is nothing but joy in my heart. Whatever happens to me in the future, I desire only to do the will of Jesus Christ.

XXXIV.

MY HYMN.

As I face the end of my life I have a word to say. At the very time when my soul was lost in darkness because of my crimes, and when the ceaseless tortures of Hell were about to come upon me, I came in touch with Jesus Christ through the leading of the two friends I have mentioned; and so entered into the City of God, where the soul cannot perish. My daily joy is indescribable. That I should receive such gracious leading from people I had never met before is something I can never forget. I want to express here my most sincere thanksgiving to them.

The following words are so full of the heart of compassion and so well describe my own life of today that I wish to set them down in this place:—

Just as I am, without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

MY HYMN

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am—Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down—
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, of that free love,
The breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
Here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.

(Then follows a poem of his own making, the first syllable of each line corresponding to the successive syllables of the Japanese alphabet, which are forty-eight in number.—Translator's note.)

At last my sins are revealed
And I sit here in prison.
My heart is filled with pain and sorrow,
And day by day I suffer without rest.
Is there a God? I cry,
But there is no answer,
And I am sunk in anguish.

Soon will the righteous judgment come upon me,
For my sins are fearful
Beyond comparison.
I am resolved to accept my doom,
But when the day of parting comes,
I must leave all I have behind me,

And there is nothing in the after world
To trust for peace of soul.

There is no day when I forget my agony.
Asleep or awake
My hand gropes
But reaches nowhere,
And I am almost mad.
My life has no meaning,
And my fear grows more and more
As I recall my sins.
What will the next world do to me?
My body is torn in pieces at the thought.
My pain and anguish
Grow greater every day
And I am sick with suffering.
Is there no wiping out of sins?
If there is a God who thinks of pity
I cry to Him in my anguish.
"Listen to the prayer of my soul,
Take me to the Heavenly City
Where my soul shall not perish;
Make me to meet my beloved father and mother!"

Then joy is revealed to me.
"Behold! Christ is here; be not afraid!
You shall see your father and your mother,
And you shall be with them
In the City of God.
You shall not die
But you shall live in glory,
And every day and all the days
You shall be glad.
You shall taste the joys
Your heart desires,
The pleasures that are beyond the world."
Today I have entered into the City.

MY HYMN

My name is defiled,
My body dies in prison,
But my soul purified
Today returns to the City of God.

I have written this poem here in prison to explain how I came to trust my fear and anguish to Christ and was rescued by His love. I ask you to be lenient with its faults.

XXXV.

WHY THE POLICE DO NOT CATCH CRIMINALS.

I wish now to write down some of the reasons why the police fail so often to catch experienced criminals like myself. I am writing this so that the officers of the law, whose duty it is to safeguard society, may be the better able to get hold of notorious criminals; and also that the criminals themselves may be brought to repentance as quickly as possible. First of all, I wish to make an explanation. In speaking about my various escapes I do so not to blame the police, but merely to put them on their guard for the future.

I was able to escape from the police both at Toyohashi and Okazaki because they themselves gave me warning of their approach. The police shout out after a man, "Thief, thief!" or "Hi, Hi!" and then attempt to close in for a hand-to-hand encounter. In this way a man has time to prepare himself for the attack. I have managed to escape times without number for this very reason.

A new hand at crime may be easily frightened and caught by this method, but an experienced fellow like myself is not at all alarmed. He simply summons up his courage, gets his dagger or knife ready, and when the onslaught comes he is prepared to defend himself. He fights desperately and usually wounds his opponents and escapes. If this were merely a theatrical performance it might be very interesting, but when it is for the purpose of actually catching dangerous

criminals it is rather crude. I have encountered policemen at night time after time, when I had committed some depredation. After leaving Chiba prison I had as many as eight or nine encounters, and I always escaped them. When they follow up a suspicious looking character they always call out in a very loud official tone, "Hi! Hi!" "Thief, Thief!" "Stop! Stop!" and so announce their coming. Even an ordinary thief does not stop, but soon makes good his escape. You may be sure that a desperate robber or a murderer will not stop. So far as the criminal is concerned, these methods merely inform him that the police are coming. They amount to nothing more nor less than that.

So far, I have told you how I was able to escape from the clutches of the police, but now I wish to explain how I might have been caught. Knowing that I was a real criminal, the police should have quietly stolen a march on me, and shouted for help after they had grappled with me. In all probability I should have been caught, and that without injuries being inflicted on them. It must be kept in mind that every desperate criminal carries a weapon of some kind, and the secret of catching him is to get him unawares. If they are already upon him before he has time to draw his knife from its sheath, he can be secured, although some injury may of course be inflicted in the struggle. There are also other possible methods. A policeman might disguise himself as an ordinary man, walk up to a suspected criminal on the road at night, and make some casual remark about the weather or the neighbourhood, while he is preparing to seize him. He would prob-

ably get the man unawares, provided he took precautions to guard himself from an unexpected attack.

For the sake of the future I want to tell how I managed to carry a sword two feet long and keep it successfully hidden. You will remember that when I was wandering about the country I carried a cake pedlar's outfit with me. In the under part of the stand I carried, I scooped out a groove just long enough and deep enough to hold the sword, and over this I fitted a false bottom, which entirely hid the sword after it was inserted. As for the short dagger that I carried in the day time, I bound it firmly against the inner side of my leg, and wore over it the tight trouser worn by labouring men, so that neither the sword nor the dagger was noticed by the police when I was examined.

PART TWO: A DIARY OF IMPRESSIONS

7,724

I.

THANKSGIVING FOR ILLNESS.

May 26, 1918.

I have been very ill since morning with a high fever and have been suffering a great deal of pain. The warder in charge has been very kind, and could not have done more for me had I been his own child. This is the first time in my life that I have ever had an illness of this kind.

May 27.

I have been taken with fever and chills, and am a good deal worse today. Miss Macdonald came purposely to see me, but unfortunately at that very time my temperature was so high that I was unable to receive her visit, although I greatly desired to hear her gracious teaching. It was probably my lack of faith that made it impossible to overcome my illness, so that I was deprived of seeing Miss Macdonald. It was no doubt God's reproof to me, and I must learn to fear and honour Him more. This illness has brought me much nearer God, and I am very grateful.

II.

THE KINDNESS OF A JAILOR.

May 28.

This morning early, while I was still in bed, a warder by the name of Wakana, who had charge of me for nearly two years, but whose work is now elsewhere, came to inquire for me. He has always been very kind to me, and today he came purposely to see me because he heard I was ill. In the afternoon the vice-governor opened my cell door and very kindly inquired for me.

During the night I was in such pain that I did not sleep a wink. I kept my eyes closed but my heart was not asleep, and I knew everything that was going on. About two o'clock in the morning, the night-warder, Kajiwara by name, thrust his hand through the hole in the door and quietly felt my head to see if I was still feverish. Without wakening me, as he thought, he was trying to find out if my fever was abating. I was very much touched by his thoughtfulness.

May 29.

The vice-governor came again and inquired for me with very kind words. Every day different officials visit me and the warder in charge comes time and again to attend to me. The principal keeper and a chief warder by the name of Wada, have also come to see me today, and the vice-governor looked in a second time. He has come three times in less than

a week, and I take it that the governor's thoughtfulness also is expressed by these visits. I cannot say in words how much all this kindness touches me. The chief chaplain,* who was recently transferred from Kosuge prison to this place, comes from time to time to see me, although he knows that I am a believer in Christ. During my illness he has visited me twice, and has been very kind. I am most grateful, but I want to say here that no matter who comes and speaks kindly to me, I shall never believe in anyone but Christ.

* All prison chaplains in Japan are Buddhist priests belonging to the Shin sect.

III.

MERCIES.

While I have been ill, I could not help wondering who would have come to see me had I been ill in the world outside. That anyone like myself, a criminal of the deepest dye, should be treated as kindly as I am, touches me so deeply that I cannot help weeping tears of gratitude. If this had been in ancient times, what would have become of me? Even with the same death penalty, I should have been cruelly exposed to the public gaze, and have been either beheaded or put to death by crucifixion, or in some other inhuman way. But I am thankful that now no show is made of an execution. This is one of the mercies that belong to the present age, for which I am profoundly grateful.

Had I lived in days gone by,
What would have been my end?
How thankful I ought to be
For the mercies of today! *

During my illness, my lawyer from Yokohama, Mr. Fujita by name, has come purposely to enquire for me. Before my Yokohama trial took place he visited me at the prison four different times and did everything for me without any fee. Even after the trial was over, he called on me twice, and since I have been back in Tokyo prison, he has come twice to see me here. As long as I live I shall remember this kindness. Yes, and after I die I shall not forget it.

* A short Japanese poem of thirty-three syllables composed by himself.

IV.

CONCERNING LAWYERS.

June 2.

I am very happy today because my fever has practically gone, and I feel quite well. My very kind Tokyo lawyer, Mr. Suzuki, who had charge of my case when it went to the appeal court, was here today. He enquired very sympathetically about my illness, and I feel very grateful to him.

Out in the world I was not at all the sort of person who could have associated with a man like Mr. Suzuki; and I wept tears of gratitude to think he would come time after time to see me in prison and express his sympathy for me. He even sent food to me at various times, sometimes twice daily, and again three times a day during one period.

There are no doubt many kinds of lawyers in Tokyo, different in outward appearance, and also different in heart. Even with the same case in hand, different lawyers would, I suppose, act very differently. For example, the lawyer who had charge of my case in the first court did not come even once to the prison to see me, either before or during the trial. I suppose that is quite usual. A lawyer called by the court to defend a man receives practically nothing for his services; and when there is no money in it, he cannot be expected to take time to find out whether an innocent man is going to be hanged or not. It even costs something to come to prison to visit the accused. I suppose this is

the way in which an ordinary man would look on it. Had I been able to pay this lawyer well, he would no doubt have come quite willingly scores of times. As the proverb says: "Even Hell yields to money."

What about my lawyer in the appeal trial? Without caring that he got nothing for his trouble, Mr. Suzuki thoroughly investigated my case for more than a year; and took infinite pains not only to prevent an innocent man from being hanged, but also to save my soul through getting the facts revealed. On this account I received a perfectly fair trial and sentence in the appeal court, which was the only thing I desired.

It is unnecessary to speak here of the joy that must have come to Komori and his family on account of his acquittal, which was made possible through my condemnation.

This is all due to the fact that God dwelt in this lawyer's heart, which was filled with love. The difference between these lawyers simply shows the contrast between the hearts in which the love of God dwells and the hearts of others. Where God's love has not entered, an ordinary man hates bad people. I suppose that was the case with my first lawyer. Where Christ's love is, there men will be kind to others. His love does not turn away from the deeper sin, but only yearns the more over it.

MR. FUJIYA SUZUKI, M. P.

The lawyer to whom Ishii refers constantly, who conducted his defence during the Appeal Court, and who was so unfailingly kind to Ishii while he was in prison.

V.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUFFERING.

June 3.

I am quite recovered from my illness, and today the first thing I did was to read over the hymn I like so well, "Just as I am, without one plea," and then give thanks to God.

I have learned so much from my recent illness that I wish to write down some of my impressions. Since I have been able to remember anything, I do not recall ever having been ill in bed as long as three days at a time, and I have known nothing of suffering due to illness. On this account I have been very unkind to sick persons, not only to those who had no connection with me, but even to my own wife. Sometimes when she had a headache and said she could not get up, I thought it was nonsense to stay in bed for such a little thing, and would pull the bedclothes away from her and compel her to rise. This I have done over and over again. She often wept at my cruelty, but I had not the slightest sympathy. I had never been ill myself and could not sympathise with the suffering of others.

However, through God's discipline I have myself felt what suffering means; and I count this sickness of mine one of God's mercies towards me, so that I have nothing but thankfulness in my heart.

VI.

A SPARROW TEACHES A LESSON.

June 9.

Today being Sunday we were obliged to clean up our cells, and as I was working away at mine I heard outside my window a loud "chirp, chirp, chirp!" of a bird; and looking out, I saw a whole flock of sparrows gathered together on the limb of a tree. They stretched out their little necks as if looking at something below them, and were making a great chatter. I thought this was rather strange, and looked out to see what could be the matter. Apparently a cat or a dog had appeared beneath the tree, and the first little bird to see it had instantly chirped a warning to his comrades. Then I understood that the sparrow had called out, "An enemy, an enemy, an enemy!"

I was greatly impressed with this. The little sparrow put me to shame, as I saw that even the birds warn one another of impending danger, and mutually protect themselves. What have I ever done to care for my kind?

It is said that man is the crown of creation, but what have I ever done in all my life to be so regarded? To be sure I have the face and shape of a man, and I am clothed with the skin of a human being, but in reality I am inferior to a sparrow. The sparrow seeks to protect his kind, but I have done nothing but cause

untold trouble to mine. So long as I have had pleasure myself I have not minded the sorrows of others, and have been absolutely selfish. I have nothing to say for myself.

VII.

THE STORY OF THE MINER.

June 12.

I was reading today a story in a book called, "From Death to Life," and I found it so interesting that I read it over and over again. It fitted my own experience so well that I wish to copy it down here.

The story in brief is this:—A very rough miner was found in a dying condition away off by himself in a one-roomed cabin in the mountains. A lady brought him food and tried to tell him about the love of God, but he cursed her to her face. After attempting for some time to help him, she decided not to go near him again; and that night when she was praying with her children she omitted the miner's name from her prayer. Her little boy Charlie said to her, "Have you given the bad man up, Mother? God hasn't given him up, has He?"

This set the mother thinking, and she decided to try again. She took a little neighbour girl with her, and went to the door of the cabin once more. The man cursed as usual, but hearing the child's voice, he recalled a little girl of his own who had died, and asked her to come into the cabin. The child knelt down and prayed a simple prayer which touched the rough miner and brought him to repentance.

VIII.

THE TRUE HEART OF A CHILD.

As I read this story I was struck by the thought that the Spirit of Christ lived in the hearts of the two little children. The mother had given up the wicked miner in despair, but little Charlie's words, "God has not given him up?" were a rebuke. In these few words is contained the heart of faith. Look at the little girl's prayer by the bedside of the sick man! "Lord Jesus! This poor man is ill; he has lost his little girl and is very sad. I am so sorry for him and he's sorry too, and I want you to help him. Amen." The words are few but they reveal an unshaken faith. I feel as if the incident had taken place before my very eyes. The real faith of the woman's little son gave her courage to try once more to soften the rough man's heart, with the result that he repented.

Jesus said: *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.* This means that we must receive the love of God with the same simplicity and truthfulness as a little child.

I began to pray: "Lord Jesus Christ! By thy great power, make my heart like a little child's, and help me to believe that all power dwells in Thee. Amen."

IX.

THOSE TWO FRIENDS OF MINE.

Now I want to say something about how the mother led the miner to know Christ. He was unspeakably bad, but was finally brought to repentance by the earnestness of the mother. This struck me as if I had been pierced by a five-inch nail.

Now my heart was very much worse than that of the miner. How did it happen that so bad a man as I came to believe in Jesus' heart of love, and was saved from destruction by clinging to His holy hand? As the miner was led through the woman who went to see him, so was my soul led to God by the two friends who visited me. The man in the story was sick and dying, and although I have no bodily sickness, my days are also numbered, and I too must soon face death. With hearts of love, these two friends led me out of the path of destruction into the way of Christ.

How long did they toil for me! The woman in the story spent weeks on the miner, but that was nothing in comparison to the time and energy my two friends spent on me. I did not even believe in my father's religion, and still less did I know anything about Christianity. One of our proverbs says, "You hate what you have not tasted," and this was how I felt about Christianity. For more than two long years they took turns in coming to visit me, minding neither the snow of winter nor the heat of summer. I do not remember how many scores of times they came.

They were determined to save me from destruction, and with earnestness and kindness they led me. A prison is not a very pleasant place even to hear about, but they actually came to the prison to visit me. Like the miner, I could not understand at first, but at last, through the zeal of these two friends, I came to believe. I cannot begin to express the hundredth part of the gratitude I feel for the good will they showed me. They are the parents of my new life, and I can never forget.

"Lord Jesus Christ! As I have repented of my sins before God through Thy power, so may many other sinners also be brought to repentance through the leading of those two friends of mine. Amen."

X.

PARADOXES.

June 16.

Today being Sunday, I was reading my New Testament and came across these words:—

As deceivers, and yet true;
As unknown, and yet well known;
As dying, and behold, we live;
As chastened, and not killed;
As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;
As poor, yet making many rich;
As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Some time ago Miss West brought these words to me as a message from Miss Macdonald, and I cannot but think how very appropriate they are to my own case.

For example,—*As deceivers, and yet true.* These words describe my first trial. I revealed everything at court because I had repented, but I was not believed either by the judge or by the lawyers. They all said that Ishii was trying to deceive people. I seemed a deceiver, but I really told the truth.

As unknown, and yet well known. These words apply to my second trial. I could not make it known myself that I had committed the crime, but in the end it was shown by other evidence than my own confession that I was really guilty.

As dying, and behold, we live. People will say that

Ishii is practically dead already because he has received a death sentence. But this is not true. Though I seem to others to be already dead, I am really alive in Christ.

As chastened, and not killed. Many will think that Ishii is enduring great suffering in prison and that before long he will be put to death. But this is not true either; my soul cannot be put to death by anyone but God, and I shall never die, because I am in the hands of Christ. I have received no chastening from others, and although my present life seems one of great torture, God will not let me die.

As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. People will say that I must have a very sorrowful heart because I am daily awaiting the execution of the death sentence. This is not the case. I feel neither sorrow nor distress nor any pain. Locked in a prison cell six feet by nine in size, I am infinitely happier than I was in the days of my sinning when I did not know God. Day and night without ceasing for a moment I am talking with Jesus Christ.

As poor, yet making many rich. This certainly does not apply to the evil life I led before I repented. But perhaps in the future, someone out in the world may hear that the most desperate villain that ever lived repented of his sins and was saved by the power of Christ, and so may come to repent also. Then it may be, that though I am poor myself, I shall be able to make many rich.

As having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Looked at from another person's standpoint, I surely seem to possess nothing. But as a matter of fact God has given me far more than I need for my daily life.

In the days before I knew God, nothing in the world seemed to be good enough for me. In the winter time, when one should be thankful for any clothes at all, I was forever dissatisfied. I always wanted better clothes than I had, and grumbled to my wife because they were not better. I am ashamed to confess it now, but the fact of the matter is that so long as I had my own way, I did not care what happened to other people. I felt no shame whatever, and only cared for outward appearances. I should have been satisfied with my daily food, provided it was sufficient to nourish me, but I always grumbled, and scolded my wife because she did not provide something better. I did not understand then that one food is as good as another after it has gone three inches past the throat. Even when I had a home of my own, I was envious of every house I saw that was the least bit better than mine. I wanted money but would not work for it, and so committed crime. But what about today? The ordinary man in prison suffers day and night and weeps in his misery; but I do not feel any discomforts at all, and my heart overflows with happiness. As I said before, other people may think that I possess nothing, but as a matter of fact I have everything. Earthly things disappear with the using, but I really own the things that I have received from God. Much as I may use them they do not disappear, for there is no end to them.

In what I have said here, I am not referring to physical life and death. The problem of this world's life and death never occurs to me now. The only thing that concerns me is the life and death of the soul.

XI.

BICYCLES.

June 18.

Today I learned a lesson from a bicycle. I have never ridden one myself, but, as I have seen people hurrying to and fro on them, I have often thought what convenient things they are. It was only recently, however, that I realised how difficult it is to learn to ride. Lately I have been watching some of the warders practising in the prison yard, as they do whenever the weather is fine.

Today I learned that before a person is able to make his way through the crowds and reach his destination without accident, he must practise with great diligence; and in the same way I see that I must put untold labour into my own task if I am ever to reach the place for which I have started.

Also if one firmly believes that he can learn to ride if he practises and does not mind the trouble it takes, he will be able to accomplish his task in the end. He will succeed if he has faith. That is the point. I learned from the parable of the bicycle that no one can attain his end unless he puts infinite toil into the adventure.

But even if we do make progress, the life span of this world is not more than forty or fifty years. I have come to see, therefore, that the goal towards which we must set our faces is the eternal life of the soul, and not merely the short life of this world. I am resolved

to mount the bicycle which will carry me thither. It is none other than the love of Christ. Through this any one may reach the destination of the Kingdom of Heaven. As Jesus said, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*

I also believe that neither with a bicycle nor in our soul's progress can we accomplish everything at a single bound. If we give up practising when we think we have become a bit expert, suddenly some unforeseen thing happens; we hurriedly mount and start off, but before we know it an accident occurs and we have plunged headlong into the moat,* bicycle and all. And so with our faith in Christ. Once believing, we must not think we have accomplished everything, but we must go on practising our faith till the very end of our earthly life.

* Many of the cities of Japan are surrounded and intersected by moats, a relic of old feudal days.

XII.

THE HAUNTED WELL.

June 20.

I was taking my daily walk in the prison yard today when I noticed an old well by the side of the path, and it at once reminded me of a very silly superstition I heard about thirty-five years ago when I was a child at home. It shows, however, the love of a father for his child, and so I shall tell the story.

In my native city of Nagoya was a street called Nishiwaki Machi where I lived with my father and my mother when I was about ten years old. About a mile from my home was a temple called Yakushiji, at the back of which was an old well. There was no thoroughfare past the well, but it could be reached easily.

Now about this time it was said that a ghost haunted the rear of the temple and every night at midnight terrible groans were heard. People called it the "groaning ghost," and after nightfall no woman or child dared pass near the place. Everyone from far and near talked about the ghost and there was a great clatter about it. Some people set out to find out just where the groans came from, and they discovered that they issued from the old well. One day in broad daylight a number of people gathered there and peeped in, but the well was so deep and dark that they could not see the bottom. They lit a lantern and let it down, but even then they could see nothing. The well had

not been used for a long time and was filled with rubbish up to the water line. Seeing this, some superstitious person suggested that the god of the well had been insulted and that his curse rested upon it. It was agreed that the temple priests should be asked to pray that the curse be removed, and every day at noon the people assembled at the well for council. The groaning, however, continued at midnight as usual.

One day, a little friend of mine said to me, "Let's go and take a look at the haunted well." I was glad enough to look at any frightful object, so we went off together and peeped in. As we were leaning over the railing that surrounded the well, it suddenly gave way and my nine-year-old friend, Yasujiro by name, tumbled in. The alarm was given, and the people of the neighbourhood hurried to the spot and raised a great fuss, but no one made the slightest effort to rescue the child. Suddenly someone rushed off to tell the boy's father, who came at once, fixed up a ladder long enough to reach to the bottom, let it down and descended with a lantern in his hand. The child was found in a fainting condition, but no serious harm had been done.

The people then inquired if there was not something unusual about the appearance of the well, and the father went down a second time to investigate. A black cat was discovered, all skin and bone and more dead than alive, huddled on a ledge far down. In this way the cause of the ridiculous superstition was unearthed. At that time every person in the neighbourhood from my father down was superstitious. Of course it is perfectly natural that people who do not believe in one true God will believe in a god of the well, a god of this

and that, and countless other gods. Before I got into prison I also believed there were many gods, but today I consider such a belief exceedingly foolish.

As I recall this story, I am greatly moved by the love of the father for the son. When the child fell into the well, mountains of people gathered at the spot, but no one made the slightest effort to rescue him for fear of the ghost. But the father thought only of the danger to his child, and went down into the darkness and saved him. Such a heart of love touches me very deeply, as I think of the joy both of the father and of the son. The same joy is in my heart as was in the child's when he was restored to his father. Through the love of the father the child was saved from the depths of the old well, as I was saved from the depths of my sins. No earthly father, however, can save his child from sin, no matter how much he may desire to do so; no matter how much trouble he may take. This can only be done by the loving hand of Christ, who alone can give imperishable life. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Because of these words I believe that for every sinner, who has not already fallen into Hell, there is salvation.

XIII.

ABOUT REPENTANCE.

June 22.

I was reading in a book today that a deathbed repentance has no value whatever. Also someone said to me not long ago, "Ishii San, your repentance has come very late. It would have been well had you repented sooner." This greatly disturbed me, when I heard it twice, and for a while I wondered if it were really true. Without doubt I had been a notoriously bad man out in the world; I had caused infinite trouble to others and I had lived an utterly selfish life. And now when I have done all the harm I can and the end is near, I turn to God and beseech Him to save me from my past sins. Have I repented too late?

Upon further thought, however, I have come to see that there are two kinds of deathbed repentance, and that there is a very great difference between them. Under certain circumstances a deathbed repentance may be too late, but it need not always be so. There are those who have heard of the love of God from childhood, but who neither believe nor practise what they hear. They put God out of their minds and live entirely for themselves. When such men come to die, God may not hear, however much they call upon Him.

On the other hand, there are some who have never heard whether there be a true God, or a Christ of love; and not knowing, they sin. But if these repent when they hear that there is a God of pity who yearns for

them in proportion to their wrongdoing, then Christ, I believe, will take their sins upon Himself, and forgive us even if repentance comes only as we die.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. To be sure I have repented very late, but I could not have repented at all if I had never heard Christ's teachings from the two friends who visited me. Then I certainly would have lost my soul, with no chance to retrieve myself, no matter with what gnashing of teeth I had repented. I am grateful indeed for the leading which brought me in touch with the merciful hand of Jesus Christ.

So I am convinced that all may be saved,—old or young, man or woman,—who will set themselves every day and every hour to live out the lessons they learn. And I do not believe that even a deathbed repentance is too late.

XIV.

THE FORTY-SEVEN LOYAL FREE LANCES.

When I first got into prison and was awaiting my trial I asked the governor to give me work to do; but recently I have given it up. My case was settled on the third of April, and the end may come tomorrow; so I want to spend all the time I have left, in learning about God and goodness and the true way of man. I cared nothing about these things when I was out in the world, and for that reason was but a demon in human form. I was, however, born a human being, and although I may be executed tomorrow, I want to die knowing at least what I can about the teachings of God, and the true path of man, and the way to do justly. So I am spending every morning studying the Bible, and in the afternoon I read other books which will help to cultivate my mind.

In the days of my sinning, when I did not have a pin's head of loyalty or filial piety or justice or kindness in me, nevertheless I liked to hear tales of loyalty and filial piety and justice at the theatre or from professional story-tellers. This is a very curious thing when one thinks about it. One would suppose that when I was doing evil all the time myself, I would enjoy seeing wickedness acted on the stage; but this was not at all the case, for I disliked it very much. Even now I cannot understand myself. Mencius said, "Man is by nature good," and perhaps it is true, but I do not know. However, be that as it may, I went

to hear these things merely for momentary pleasure, and not at all to improve myself.

Among the books I have read recently that have impressed me is one called "The Forty-Seven Loyal Free Lances." The centre and whole point of the story is loyalty, and the outline is as follows:—

Lord Asano, through the hatred of his enemy, Lord Kira, was condemned to death and obliged to commit suicide; and his lands and castle were confiscated. Forty-seven of his retainers swore to avenge the death of their lord, and to see neither wife nor child, father nor mother, until they carried out their revenge and presented Lord Kira's head at the grave of their dead master.

They endured untold privations and distresses, but finally fulfilled their duty. They then gave themselves up to the authorities and were handed over to various feudal lords for safe custody. They were condemned to death for the crime of killing Lord Kira, and executed.

In connection with this story is an incident which has a bearing on religion. According to the law of that time there was one person who had power to petition the Shogun * for these men's lives. That man was a priest, but I cannot understand the kind of religion he had when he did not make use of his power to get these loyal men pardoned. I shall tell this part of the story and then express my thoughts about it.

No one wanted these very loyal retainers to be put to death. Even the Shogun's Government was anxious

* In feudal days, the chief executive of the nation, acting on behalf of the Emperor, who at that time did not assume direct control of the state.

to save them if possible, and many eminent people hoped that clemency would be granted to the men who had shown such exceptional devotion to their lord. It was rumoured that the Shogun himself desired to pardon them, and the people leapt for joy at the news, for everyone took it as a personal matter.

But the law could not be changed and its processes ignored on account of merely personal feelings, for the world must be governed. So the men were condemned to death, and the Shogun was obliged to confirm the verdict.

There was one hope, however. A certain priest of imperial lineage at Nikko might petition the Shogun, and he was the only one in the land who had this power.

At the New Year's season this royal priest came to Tokyo to pay a visit to the Shogun, and in the midst of a conversation the latter very significantly remarked, "It is a distressing thing to govern the state. I suppose the news about the retainers of Lord Asano has reached even your ears. Such loyalty and devotion touches me deeply and I fain would save them, but alas! justice allows no way." The Shogun in this way suggested that the royal priest might intercede. The priest, however, merely said, "I sympathise greatly with your distress," and then retired.

When the Shogun's wife heard this, she herself sent a messenger to the priest, and asked him directly to petition for the lives of the knights. The priest sighed deeply. "I do not remember ever being so distressed in all my life as when the Shogun spoke to me about these men. I sympathise most deeply with him, and being a priest, I also desire greatly to save these men

from death. But among these forty odd men are some hotblooded youths, who, if their lives were spared now, might in the future do something to stain the good reputation they have already made for themselves. For this reason it would seem more in accordance with the mercy of Amida to let the law take its course. Therefore, drinking tears as I do so, I must shut my eyes; both for the sake of the nation and for the men themselves." The law took its course and a few days later the loyal retainers were put to death.

I want to say now what I think about the royal priest's refusal to petition for the lives of these men. I fail to see how the mercy of Amida was shown. When this royal priest by a word might have spared their lives, and yet refused to do so for the sake of a remote possibility that they might defile their names,—I cannot understand how he could say he was being merciful. This may be the way of Buddhism, but if it is, then, even though it be the religion of my ancestors, I cannot believe so merciless a thing. I could understand the story if the positions of the priest and the Shogun were reversed, and the priest had begged the Shogun to pardon the men. But when the Shogun made the request, and the priest refused and claimed that by so doing he was showing forth the mercy of Amida,—that I cannot understand. He should have given them a chance to live on and make their fame still greater.

But it may be said by some who do not understand the true heart of these retainers, that they probably would have gone wrong later if they had lived. I do not believe such a thing would have been possible.

Even had they been pardoned they would not have returned to their families and spent the remainder of their lives in pleasure. These loyal men did not have such cowardly and rotten souls as that! Had they been pardoned I believe they would have gone at once to the grave of their dead lord, and there taken their own lives and followed their master into the next world. This was, I believe, their intention to do, as soon as they had accomplished their revenge. What a praiseworthy end it would have been! My ignorant mind cannot find words to describe the glory of it; but if we can imagine the fragrance of the plum added to the beauty of the cherry blossom, we shall have some faint idea of the loveliness of such a deed. But instead of this, they were put to death as criminals, these forty-seven loyal knights.

Why then did they give themselves up to the government instead of taking their own lives when their revenge was accomplished? Some may say that they hoped to get their punishment mitigated. They were not cowards of that kind. Not one, not even half a one among them could have been so effeminate as that! Then the reason why they did not take their own lives was because it would have caused confusion to the state. The killing of Lord Kira was an act of vengeance, and as such was a deed of loyalty worthy of the retainers of their master; but it was also a crime against the laws of the land. It was but right that they should hand themselves over to the government to await its decision; and in so doing they showed the true Japanese spirit in a manner entirely worthy of them.

I have tried to show here that there is a very great difference between the mercy of Buddhism and that of Christianity. Now I want to say something about what I think is the meaning of Christ's mercy. If the royal priest had been a Christian, he would have asked on his own initiative for the lives of these men, and not have allowed them to be put to death. Then, of their own accord, they could have followed their master to the next world, and have left a still more glorious name behind them. I do not believe that when Jesus gave his life for people who sinned, he was concerned with the fear that they might fall again at some remote future time. He could not think so, because he loved people like his own children, and could not condemn them to a cruel death before his very eyes.

But Christ gives us not only physical life, but also the eternal life of the soul. That there is anywhere such love for the children of men is a matter for deep thankfulness. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

XV.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

June 24, Monday.

Miss West came to see me today and I was even more pleased than usual with her visit, as I had not seen either of my friends for some time. When Miss Macdonald came on the twenty-seventh of May, I was ill and could not see her. A few days ago I wrote begging one of them to visit me, and Miss West came in response to my letter. She asked me to remember especially the words of the twenty-third Psalm, and in order to do so I am writing them down rather than merely reading them over a number of times.

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk
Through the valley of the shadow of death
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me
In the presence of my enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil;

My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

These words correspond so closely to my own experience that I write them with deep gratitude in my heart.

I was so grateful for Miss West's visit that I prayed after she left me: "Lord Jesus, I thank Thee from the bottom of my heart that Thou hast answered all the prayers I have ever made to Thee. In the coming days when enemies attack my soul from all quarters, lend me Thy power to conquer them all. Amen."

XVI.

EARTHQUAKES.

June 26.

Last night about eleven o'clock an earthquake occurred, the most severe for some time. The prison was badly shaken, being a wooden structure and two stories high. It reminded me of the great earthquake which occurred in Gifu and Aichi provinces in 1891, when I was about seventeen years of age. Never in all my recollection has there been such another catastrophe. I shall describe some of the things I saw at that time.

A little south of Nagoya at Atsuta was a weaving factory, where more than a thousand men and women were employed, who went back and forth every day to their work. As the earthquake occurred about six o'clock in the morning, just after the day and night shifts had exchanged, the night shift escaped; but with the exception of a few late comers, the entire day shift were instantly killed. The scene was so pitiful I could scarcely bear to look upon it. Bodies were crushed under the débris of brick and stone of which the factory had been built; and even the parents and relatives of the dead could not identify their own folk except by bits of clothing found here and there among the ruins.

Two or three days later I went to the city of Gifu, and the devastation there was more awful than tongue or pen can describe. The stench of burning bodies was almost more than I could bear. Buildings had fallen,

fires had broken out, and the whole town was practically destroyed. Thousands were unable to escape, and had been burned alive.

The main street had been torn asunder and a great jagged tear, two or three feet wide, had been made, through which dirty water was running, so that people could not get across the road. With the exception of the prison, and a very small part of the town, everything was burnt to the ground.

Adjoining Nagoya was a place called Kasamatsu where everything, including the police station and the village office, was destroyed, and the whole site looked like an open field. People had tried to escape and had been burned to death; parents were left and children gone; children left and parents gone; in some cases whole families were wiped out. It was indeed a dreadful sight. At Ogaki the earthquake occurred at the time of morning prayers at one of the temples. The structure fell in and all the worshippers were killed. A certain hamlet lay between two mountains, both of which caved in on it. The only thing left above ground was the roof of the temple, and all else, houses and people alike, were completely submerged. I went to the village of Taketomi, about five miles from Gifu City, and found the whole place turned into a pond.

The damage was all done on the first day of the earthquake, but for a month smaller shocks were felt every day. The people of Nagoya were terrified, and instead of returning to their homes, they built temporary huts in the bamboo thickets outside the city and remained in refuge there.

After this experience I was afraid of nothing so

much as earthquakes; and this fear continued until I learned to know God. Through His power I am not in the least afraid of them any more. As a matter of fact, no true Christian feels anxiety about anything that happens from without, however great the calamity may be. Christians do not fear even death, which to ordinary people is the most fearsome thing in all the world. They fear only God, and nothing else can make them afraid. This I have learned from my own experience.

XVII.

A TALK WITH JAILORS AND POLICEMEN.

I am reminded here of another earthquake which occurred while I was in Yokohama prison. One day as I sat in my cell reading, a rather severe earthquake took place. It was unusually long, and made a good deal of noise. I heard the sound of commotion in the other cells, which showed that the inmates were alarmed. I scarcely noticed the noise myself, and kept on quietly reading. The warder in charge made his rounds while the earthquake was going on, and afterwards stopped at my cell and said: "Ishii San, are you deaf?"

"Not in the least," I replied, and then he asked me.

"Did you know there was an earthquake just now?"

"Oh, yes," I answered.

"Then how was it," he asked me, "that you sat quietly reading as if you didn't know that an earthquake was shaking the place?"

I answered, "When I was out in the world there was nothing I feared so much as earthquakes. Since I have come to believe in Chrsit I have not the slightest fear. Not only that, but I am not afraid of any outside thing. This is due not to the power of my own will, but to the power of Christ."

"Then," said the warder, "there must be some real power in Christianity. How do you get admitted to this religion? Can you get in by paying money?"

"No," I replied, "You only need to believe from the

bottom of your heart in the words of Jesus Christ and you can get in."

He went on: "Ishii San, how long have you believed in Christ?" I told him that it was after I was put in prison and received books from my two friends who visited me many times.

"Did you know those people before you got into prison?" he asked, and when I answered "No," he said:

"Well, of course, Tokyo is a large city and you may find people there who will send books to persons whom they have never seen before, but I can assure you I have never heard of such a thing as that in Yokohama."

When my trial in Yokohama was over I was sent back to Tokyo prison under a police guard, and while I was waiting in the police station, one of the officials asked me some questions about Christianity. I was explaining as well as I could, when another policeman said to me: "There are many different religions in the world, but it seems to me that you who believe in Christianity do not much care what happens to your lives."

I at once replied to this: "No Christian holds his life lightly, nor throws it away recklessly. But you must keep in mind that I am a man under sentence of death for crimes against the law, and my life is not mine to give or keep. I can not complain therefore even if my life is taken today. But I do not fear to die, for my soul shall not be destroyed. But this is true not only of me but of all Christians, that they do not fear, even if they are ill or endure distress or suffer greatly. They quietly leave everything in the hands of

God, and even while they suffer, they rejoice and wait patiently until they recover. On the other hand, those who are not Christians make a great fuss about any little illness, and immediately call for the doctor or medicine or temple prayers. And when the doctor comes his diagnosis is wrong and another doctor must be called, and so they fret and worry. And when they recover they exaggerate the suffering they have endured. There are many such people in the world. Through such and many other differences in people the power of Christ is revealed. When Paul was being sent to Rome, a great storm occurred while he was on board ship, and for several weeks they were tossed about, and in great danger. With the exception of Paul himself, they all lost courage and became like dead men. Paul was not afraid because Christ was with him. When I tell you that Christians fear nothing but God, I want you to understand that I am not just pretending, for it is really true. Here are Christ's own unshakeable words: *And be not afraid of them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.*

As I was speaking in this way, one of the policemen standing by, said: "Perhaps it is true then, that the teachings of Christ are the foundation for the path of men."

During the hour and a half I was in the police station a large number of policemen and detectives gathered round to hear what I had to say.

July 3.

Mr. Suzuki, my lawyer, came to see me today and

enquired very kindly after me. He brought some writing paper and food to me, which I received after he left. I wanted to write a letter of thanks to him, but somehow or other I did not know how to express my feelings. Instead of being disgusted with a worthless fellow like myself he has come to see me, time after time, and whenever he comes, he brings me food. His visits alone would abundantly reveal his thoughts for me, but he does so much besides. I cannot express my appreciation in words, I can only weep tears of gratitude and thank God.

XVIII.

THE PRISON BATH.

July 4.

While I was in the bath today I understood in a new way how God's mercy and love come to us.

In this prison there are very good bath facilities for the inmates, who are allowed to bathe twice a week. Several scores of tubs are arranged very conveniently and are filled with cold water. From a steam boiler some distance away, pipes are laid to the baths, and the water is heated when the steam is let in by turning a tap. Now no matter how much steam may be in the pipes, the water remains cold unless the man in the bath turns on the tap which lets the steam in.

I saw that this is exactly the way in which God's salvation works. Through the steam of God's love, our cold and unaffectionate hearts are warmed, but we ourselves must open the tap to let the love in. No matter how abundant God's love may be, we shall remain cold forever if we keep the tap closed.

XIX.

ABOUT JUDGES.

July 7.

Today as I was reading in the twenty-third chapter of Luke about Jesus' trial and death, I started thinking about judges, and had reason to thank God for some of the blessings that have come to me. When I was out in the world living a selfish and wicked life, I considered judges and procurators, policemen and prison officials my greatest enemies. This is the feeling of everyone who commits crime. In those days I did not care how much harm I did to others. I did not even think I was doing wrong, and only dreaded getting caught. I hated the procurators who prosecuted me, and the judges who sentenced me. I hated the prison officials who disciplined me, although I was constantly breaking rules. This is always the way with criminals. But when once I repented of my sins, and believed the teachings of Christ, my enemies became my benefactors. This was all due to the change in my own heart, for as a matter of fact, the judges and jailors remained the same. This illustrates the difference between believing and not believing in Christ. Jesus had no hate in his heart for his enemies, and no follower of His can hate another person.

The following experience will show that my feelings really did change towards those I formerly considered my enemies. It is an unheard of thing for a procurator who urges the judge to pronounce a death sentence on

a criminal, to visit the condemned man afterwards in prison. And yet this is what Mr. Ohira, the public prosecutor at my appeal trial, actually did. Had he not been perfectly sure that I had no resentment towards him, he would not have dreamed of coming to see me. This shows, I think, that my heart has entirely changed towards those whom otherwise I should have hated.

XX.

RECOLLECTIONS.

July 8.

Today I recalled some of the good and evil in my past life, and I want to put down my thoughts. It is twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago since I began to go in bad ways, and I cannot even now forget some of those early crimes I committed and the way I caused trouble to others. When I think back on these things I am greatly distressed. However, once in a while I did try to do some small kindnesses and as I recall them now I am greatly comforted.

In thinking over the life that men lead together in this world, and the various kinds of work they do, it seems to me that the greatest happiness and pleasure come from bringing wicked men to repentance, and guiding them to the holy hand of God. The joy of the repentant one also is very great. The guidance of my two friends has given me a gladness which a million yen of money could not do. Money disappears with the using, and its use is limited to this world. It is absolutely worthless when the soul is separated from the body.

It is different with the gifts of God. They do not decrease as we use them, but they grow as we spend them. Their use is not limited to this world, for they can be used endlessly. What wonderful gifts they are! The gifts that have been given me I can always use, whatever the time and whatever the place. As it is summer

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Buddhist Priest and Head Chaplain of Tokyo Prison

now the days are long, and I am sure the other prisoners find the time hanging heavily on their hands; they probably also feel distressed by the heat. It is not so with me. No matter how long the day is, it seems short to me, and I am always glad of a little more time. I do not mind the heat at all. This is one of God's gracious gifts to me.

The vice-governor of the prison came again to see me today, and as usual enquired very kindly for me. I am so grateful for all the kindness I receive that I want to express what is in my mind, but I find that the words will not come. They stick in my throat and I can only weep tears of gratitude. I cannot write one-tenth of what I feel. But what I do say comes from the bottom of my heart.

XXI.

THE KINDNESS OF OFFICIALS.

July 9.

Today the chief warder came to my cell and brought with him another official newly come to the prison. Every day different warders come to see me, and they could not treat me more kindly if I were their own child.

I am pondering over this very earnestly. When some unexpected sorrow comes to one's family, people are usually willing to help, and will do a good deal for a time. But even one's own relations often grow weary, and cease to be kind if the trouble is long drawn out.

On the other hand, the officials in this prison, for the past two or three years, have been unfailingly kind to me, a man who has done nothing but harm in the world, and who is a condemned criminal. I cannot believe that such kindness would have been possible had I remained the worthless fellow that I was before I received the grace of God. All this has come to me because I am daily guarded by the loving Christ, and I can only thank Him from the bottom of my heart.

I have spoken of this mercy that has followed me for long days and months, because I am hoping that some time people out in the world may read what I have written, and will realise how even an abandoned criminal like myself, whose very name brought terror to all who heard it, received untold kindness from the

prison officials because he had entered into God's salvation.

I wish everyone to know that I spend my days in happiness because of the love of God which passes our power to measure. Christ's love really does mean that there is eternal salvation for even the most abandoned, if he repents and believes.

XXII.

THE PITIFUL LITTLE ANTS.

July 12.

I was outside today getting my exercise as usual, when I noticed something that made me see in a new way that there is power in God. I saw four or five ants seeking diligently for food. I have heard that ants are very shrewd insects: they lay by their winter food in summer and then maintain themselves underground during the winter. I have no doubt they are clever little beasts, but as we look at them with the eyes of men there is something very pitiful about them. As they search for their food they have not sense enough to know whether the place they crawl about in is safe for them or not, and they are often trodden under foot. They know how to seek for food, but they cannot protect themselves from danger.

And so I thought about ourselves in the same way. Above, God is watching us day and night without ceasing; here we are below, taken up with the pleasures of the body, with eye and heart lost in the greed of the world, and not knowing the places where our souls may be crushed under foot. Surely from God's standpoint we are pitiful creatures. This I have come to understand.

Just as the little ants would be protected if some kind person would pick them up, and set them away in a safe place, so we are protected by Christ if we cling to Him.

XXIII.

THE WRITING OF AN UNEDUCATED MAN.

July 13.

Today a judge, together with the chief warder, visited me in my cell. "I hear you are busy writing," said the judge. "What is it about?" I told him that since I had got into prison I had learned to know the love of Christ, and that I was writing about this and the kindness I was receiving from the officials. "But, as you see, I am an uneducated man, and I cannot express all the things that are in my heart. I can write only very simply."

"Ah, but that's what gives flavour to writing," said the judge. "When a literary man writes, he embellishes and ornaments until the flavour is all gone. The simple style of an uneducated man is much the best, and I want you to continue to write in your own way." *

I told the chief warder who had come with the judge that I was very anxious to write and thank Mr. Suzuki, my lawyer, for all his kindness and the trouble and expense I had cost him; but that I did not know how to express myself properly. The chief warder said, "Mr. Suzuki has been indeed extraordinarily kind, and he is

* The chaplain tells the following story: "One day when I went to see Ishii I found him sitting up straight and studying very diligently with a dictionary; not seeming in the least aware that his life might be cut off at any moment. 'You seem to think,' I said to him, 'that it is worth while even now to read and study, and I should like to know just what your purpose is.'

"He replied, 'For the very reason that I have not studied until now, I have not understood the path men ought to walk, and I have wandered far away. I regret this so much that even now I want to know enough to be able at least to let people know the cause of my mistakes.'"

a man to be greatly admired. But everyone is very sympathetic with you because you have reformed, and the only thanks necessary is your good behaviour." Without knowing it, I found myself shedding tears.

XXIV.

"THY STAFF IT COMFORTS ME."

July 14.

Today is Sunday and I was reading the Psalms when I came across this sentence, *Thy staff it comforts me.* I put my mind to this verse to think it out. As we are born and enter into the life of the world, the one indispensable thing is the staff of the love of Christ, if we would follow God and walk the path of men. So far as the way of God is concerned, we are really like blind people, even though our outward eyes may be open. Without this staff of Christ's love we cannot reach our destination in safety.

Several years ago I saw a blind dog searching about for food. Now a blind man would have had a staff with him, and could have got about with safety, but this poor blind dog, being but a beast, had nothing to guide him. He was constantly knocking against something or falling into the moat, and it was pitiful to see the poor brute. As I did not know God at that time I did not retain the incident long in my mind, but recalling it now, I wonder if the poor dog has not long since met with some violent death.

We shall never reach our destination of heaven unless guided by the staff of God's love. Like the poor blind dog, we shall fall by the wayside, and our souls shall forever be destroyed.

XXV.

THE HEART OF A CHRISTIAN.

An unbeliever cannot understand the true heart of a Christian, for he takes his own heart as the standard when he judges others. On the other hand, a Christian can thoroughly understand another person's heart, for he can discern things through the power of Christ. There is a saying of Christ's which is very applicable to non-Christians: *For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man, gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.* To my mind, these words show a deep knowledge of the real heart of the unbeliever. My own case illustrates them very well.

When, through Christianity, I learned that there is both power and love in God, I repented of all my sins, confessed them before God, and told the whole truth at the court in order to make some reparation for my sins. But no one who was not a Christian believed in my sincerity. "Ishii is crazy," people said, or "He does not speak soberly." This corresponds to the words of Christ which I have quoted.

If, on the other hand, I had not disclosed the facts and had obstinately refused even in the face of evidence to admit that I was guilty, people would have said, "What an obstinate fellow Ishii is! What an

unheard-of villain!" They surely would have called me a monstrous fellow. All of which goes to show that an unbeliever cannot understand the heart of a Christian.

July 15.

Today the Festival of the Dead is being celebrated in all the provinces of Japan, and their spirits are being worshipped everywhere. Grown-up people and children alike are spending three days in doing honour to their ancestors.

Until I was twelve or thirteen years of age, I had no wrong in my heart and spent my days happily at home. Then I always looked forward to both New Year's Day and the Festival of the Dead, and used to count off the days on my fingers until they came. I celebrated those days with great delight.

By the time I was seventeen or eighteen years old, however, wickedness was already lodged in my heart, and I no longer found any pleasure in these festivals. There were many reasons for this: first because my heart was bad, second because my parents rebuked me and I felt uncomfortable, and third because I was always expecting to be found out. I was frightened at everything. I was afraid of everyone who looked at me. I kept wondering whether this person were a detective or that one a policeman, and whether they were coming to arrest me; so that I did not have a moment's peace of mind. There was no longer any joy in my heart. I would use the money I stole to buy grand clothes for myself, thinking I would be happy when

people admired me, but never a bit of real happiness did I feel.

But having received the love of Christ since getting into prison I am joyous from the depths of my heart, not only on these festival days, but every day, and all this I attribute to the mercy of God.

July 18.

Today the head chaplain came to my cell and made enquiries about the state of my mind. He knows that I am a believer in Christ, but he still comes once every week or two to talk to me. Being a Buddhist himself, you would naturally think he would talk about Buddhism; but never once has he done so. He has never suggested that it would be well for me to believe in Buddhism. He simply encourages me to believe more deeply in Christianity. Not only that, but he has lent me Christian books to read. I have a very great admiration for this chaplain. Now, for the sake of his own cause, an ordinary man would likely speak evil of Christianity, and try to persuade me to study Buddhism, but this chaplain does nothing of the kind. I have a deep respect for him.

During our conversation today he told me that he had been enquiring of the other men condemned to death with what feelings they spend their days. They told him that every morning when the dawn comes they wonder if today will bring the end; and when an official appears they think that he has come to take them out to death. They wait in agony till nine o'clock has passed, and then if no summons comes, they know they have escaped death for one more day. But the

next morning brings the same fear with it, and the days pass one by one, in distress and agony.

He then turned to me and said: "For most people the day dawns in happiness; but for these poor fellows who have sinned, the morning brings nothing but fear and despair. I feel so sorry for them. What are your feelings as you face these things?"

"I too am very sorry for these men," I replied, "but I do not feel at all as they do. This I owe to the power of Christ."

"Then do you want to die as soon as possible?" he asked me, but I answered, "No."

"What then do you think about it all?" he asked.

I replied, "During these days I am not giving any thought whatever to the life or death of the body; the problem does not so much as enter my head. I have resolved to accept the will of Heaven, and I have left everything in God's hands. There is not the slightest distress in my mind. When morning breaks I welcome the day with gladness."

"It is well to have your mind so firmly fixed," said the chaplain, "but tell me how you came to have such faith." I told him I had read many books, and he said, "But the various ideals of men enter so largely into books that it is difficult to make them a foundation for faith."

Upon hearing this, I reached out for my New Testament which was near by, and said to him, "But in this book the words of Christ are written, and through them I know that He is here in this very cell. Although I cannot see Him with my outward eye, I talk with Him every day."

"It is good to have such faith," said the chaplain. "I want you to enter in more and more deeply."*

Since this conversation I cannot but think of those poor fellows who, like myself, are facing death, but who are buried under the agony of the thought of it. Here am I, on the other hand, with no distress of any kind whatever, and I spend the days with gladness because of Christ's love and mercy. It is indeed terrible to be so distressed on account of the life of the body, and I pity them from the depths of my soul. Oh! that I might see those men and tell them, that they also may receive the love of Christ and be at peace! But I cannot do this, and I can only ask that my two friends when they read what I have written, will understand my desire, and will themselves lead these men to Christ. But I can pray for them.

* The chaplain thoroughly understood Ishii's genuine repentance, but he asked him the following question one day to test him: "Now that you have repented and are no longer the Ishii you were, but are an entirely different person, I am not the only one who would like to see you get another chance. What do you feel about it? Do you want another chance?"

"No, no! Such a thought has never come to me. I have only one desire now and that is to go to God. I long for that alone both day and night. I ought to accept all the responsibility that comes to me on account of the laws of the land: but God will not forsake me when the times comes, because of Christ's Cross; and although my body will perish, my soul shall enter into the mercy of pardon."

XXVI.

A JUDGE AND CHIEF WARDER.

July 24.

A judge, together with one of the chief warders, came to my cell to visit me today. The judge introduced himself and told me that although he had had no connection with my trial, he had had with that of Komori. He had come to the prison on business and wanted to talk with me.

"You have become a Christian, I hear," he said. "Does someone come to teach you?" I said that Miss West and Miss Macdonald came at times and that they sent me books. I told him I did not understand the Bible very well until I read Christ's prayer for his enemies on the Cross: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* "There can be no greater love than this," I said, "that a man should pray for his enemies at the very moment when they are taking his life."

"An ordinary man in your circumstances," remarked the judge, "would have fallen already into the depths of despair, but through God's power you seem contented with your lot, and it is well. Do not forget your faith, but go on to even better things." He then left me and I was much moved by his kind words.

Since coming to prison a number of such men have come to see me and I am very grateful for all their kindness, which is all due to the mercy of Christ's love.

The official who came with the judge today, Mr. Wada by name, was the chief warder of Chiba prison in 1905 when I was there, and he was very kind to me. When I left the prison I resolved on that account to reform and live a new life; and I felt that if I did not, I could never look Mr. Wada in the face again. And now years after, when I am put into Tokyo prison, I find to my astonishment that Mr. Wada is an official here. I was both surprised and ashamed to see him; for I felt that anyone who had repaid his kindness as I have done is really not a human being at all. "He is a beast who forgets favours." It is but natural to hate a man who forgets past kindnesses, but Mr. Wada has not changed in the least towards me. He treats me in exactly the same way as he did in Chiba prison, so that I scarcely feel deprived of my freedom. I am so ashamed that I should like to crawl into a hole if I could find one; and yet this kindness and consideration is all due to Christ's mercy, and I can only thank God over and over again for all His gifts to me.

The manuscript ends here, his last writing being on July twenty-fourth, 1918.

NOTES TAKEN FROM CAROLINE MACDONALD'S JOURNAL.

August 8, 1918.

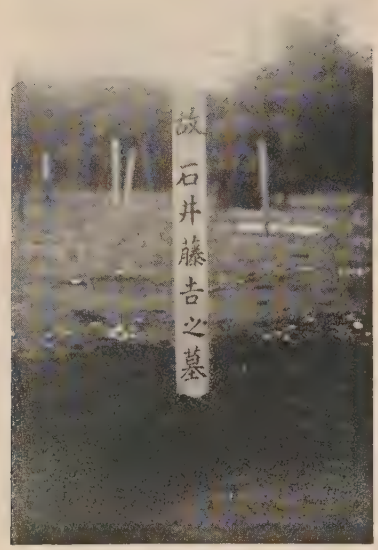
I saw him just two weeks after his writing was finished, and as it happened, for the last time. The day of doom is not publicly fixed in Japan, and neither he nor I knew that it would be the last time; but we both knew it might be, and we faced the issue. "I do not know when it will come," he said, "perhaps to-morrow, perhaps the day after; but I have finished my writing and my task is done. I am just waiting now to lay down this body of sin and go to Him." His face, marred and sin-stained as it was, was lit up with a radiance not of this world as he spoke of his going.

What did we talk about? What can one say to a man who is going to be hanged tomorrow, or the next day, or the day after? I read to him parts of the hundred-and-sixteenth psalm, words penned centuries ago; but as I stood there in a tiny cubby hole and talked to him across a passage way and through a wire screen, it seemed impossible to believe that they were not written for the very thing we faced there in the prison house. *"I love the Lord because he heareth my voice and my supplication.—The cords of death compassed me, the*

pains of Sheol gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.—The Lord preserveth the foolish" (the stupid, the dull, as the Japanese version has it); and as I read those words he interrupted to say, "Yes, that's exactly like me! Foolish, dull, stupid, and he has preserved me." I read on.

"I was brought low and he saved me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." I looked at him, and his eyes were glowing with joy. What had God done to this man, who for all I knew as I stood there might be hanged tomorrow, that he should think that God had dealt bountifully with him? The psalm itself answered, *"He hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."*

Then came these words, *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "Precious is the death of his saints."* I stopped reading and looked across at him. Nothing was left him now but death, whereby to glorify God: and there suddenly flashed into my mind and on to my tongue, other words, penned centuries later than the psalmist's and again centuries removed from us. *"No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."* I said to him, "You will remember that?" I did not say when he should remember. There was no need to do that. There was but one spot for him on the horizon of this world's future. He lowered his head for a moment and closed his eyes, and when he



The 7 Chinese Characters read thus from top to bottom:

1	The Late	This character always the first on a tombstone
2	Ishi	Ishii
3	i	
4	To	Tokichi's
5	Kichi	
6	's	
7	Grave	

This inscription was written by the Temple Priest

The Reverse Side

God
is
Love

Literally *God Love Is*

This was written by the Prison Official who first suggested translating the book and who took Miss MacDonald to find the grave.

The Temple Priest standing in the background.

THE GRAVE OF TOKICHI ISHII IN THE "POTTER'S FIELD" IN THE TEMPLE OF THE KING OF HEAVEN TENNOJI

looked up, there shone in his face that radiant light that was the wonder of prison officials and others who saw him, and he said, "I understand. Yes, I shall remember."

August 18, 1918.

Ten days later, the following official letter came to me from the prison chaplain, and I knew he had remembered.

"This morning, the seventeenth of August, at nine o'clock, Tokichi Ishii was executed at Tokyo prison. He faced death rejoicing greatly in the grace of God, and with steadiness and quietness of heart. His last message was that you be told of today's event, and I am writing in his stead to let you know of his going and to thank you for your many kindnesses to him. He has left his books and manuscripts for you and you will receive them at the prison office. His last words, which are in the form of a poem, he asked me to send to you. They are as follows:

'My name is defiled,
My body dies in prison,
But my soul purified
Today returns to the City of God.'"

* * * * *

So with the Lord: He takes and He refuses,
Finds him ambassadors whom men deny.
Wise men nor mighty for His saints he chooses;
No, such as John, or Gideon, or I.

* * * * *

The story of his passing was told us afterwards by the Buddhist chaplain who was with him.

"Many who die on the scaffold face death with a firm resolution to win a good name for themselves at the end, and not to be a laughing stock to the world. But Ishii's fortitude was far different from that. He had not the slightest appearance of desiring to win a good name or of merely enduring the inevitable. With humility and great earnestness, he seemed to see nothing but the glory of the heavenly world to which he was returning, when he had cast off the heavy load of his sins; just as one turns with great yearning to his own native home. Among the officials who stood by and saw the clear colour of his face and the courage with which he bore himself, there was no one but involuntarily paid him respect and honour. On the very scaffold, when in a moment his life was to disappear like a dewdrop, he uttered those last words of his: 'My soul, purified, today returns to the City of God!' "

A few days later, I was called to the prison office, and was told that something remained to be given to me. A document was produced, to which I was asked to affix my name and thumbprint, just beside Ishii's name and thumbprint, where he had signed his will, and left to me all his worldly possessions. There was then handed over to me all that he had died possessed of,—one sen, a single copper coin, worth a farthing. It was my first and only legacy, and I shall keep it as a reminder of the days that are gone, and as a token of the "glory that shall follow."

THE END.

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